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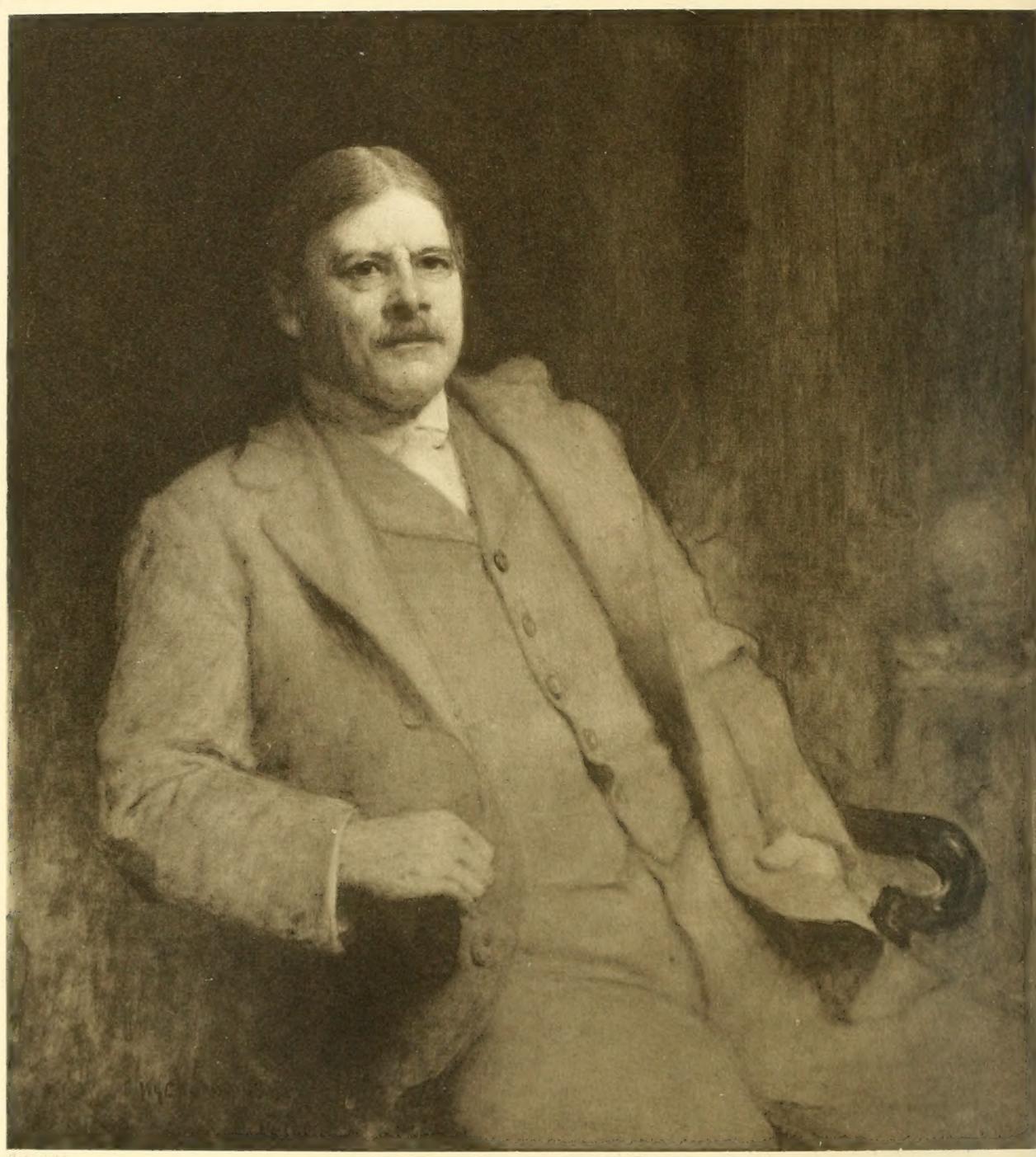












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PORTRAIT OF EDWIN A. ABBEY.

AGE 57.

PAINTED BY SIR W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A., IN 1909.

EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY  
Royal Academician

The Record of His Life and Work  
By E.V. Lucas

With Two Hundred Illustrations  
Volume II

1894-1911

NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
LONDON: METHUEN AND COMPANY LIMITED  
1921



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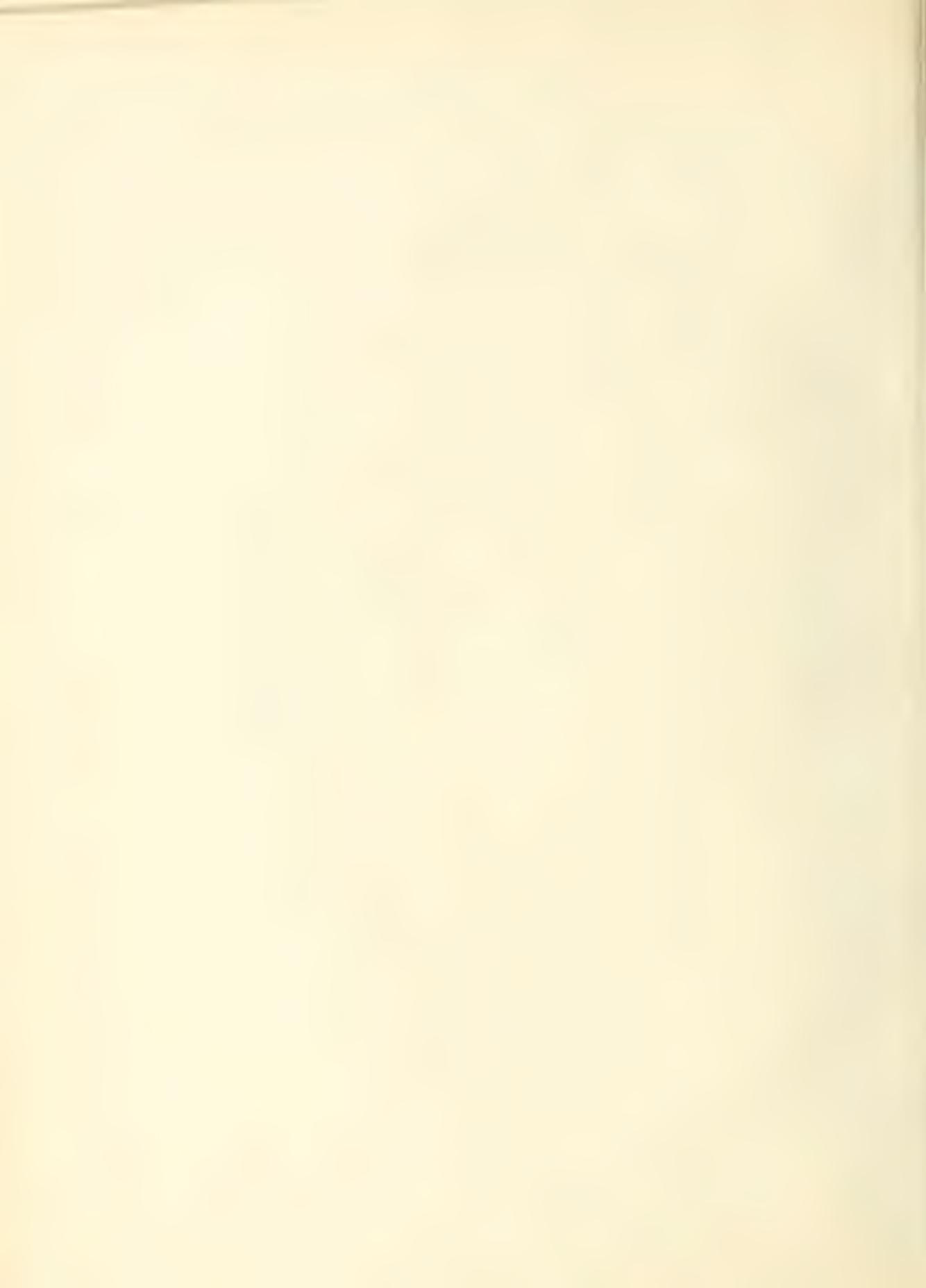
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The greater number of the illustrations are produced by the photogravure process, some by the collotype method. A few representing the artist's earlier work in *Harper's Magazine* are printed from the original engravings upon wood. The remainder of the pictures, including those in the text from sketch-books or letters, are photographically produced blocks. As both the wood engravings and the photographic blocks are printed typographically, a comparison, interesting to the expert, is possible.

The original drawings were made upon a considerably larger scale than that upon which they were published, and thus, owing to the reduction, much of their beauty was lost; their entire charm can only be properly appreciated by those who are fortunate enough to see the originals.

It is recognised that certain of the illustrations are rather too large for these volumes, but the question was whether they should be included, notwithstanding their size, or be omitted altogether.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### COMPLETION OF THE FIRST FIVE “HOLY GRAIL” PANELS

1894 Aged 41-42

Creative Energy —Unfinished Pictures —“Fiammetta’s Song”—Travels in Search of the Romanesque—Le Puy-en-Velaye —An Exciting Discovery—The First Pastel —Henry James and the Eggs —Completion of the First Half of the Boston Task—  
A Projected Exhibition

THE year 1894 saw the completion of the first half of the “Holy Grail” frieze—90 feet; saw the last drawing done for the Comedies (“The Marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta”); saw the first pastels. To the Royal Academy Abbey sent his “Fiammetta’s Song”; and he painted in this year the water-colour “An Attention.”

The contract with the Harpers for illustrations in the magazine having come to an end, there was no imperative call for Abbey to make black-and-white drawings; but such was the exuberant activity of his mind and hand that, in spite of all his other work, he found time to add to his store of illustrations, choosing now a subject from *The Deserted Village*, now from *The Good NATURED Man*, or an old song, and putting them away for future use. Other byways from the great high road of decoration which he was now travelling took him in this most fertile year to the beginnings of quite a number of pictures, and his sketch-books bear testimony to the scenes and visions which pursued one another ceaselessly through his brain, all of which he hoped some day to finish, humanly impossible as this would be! Many were transferred to canvas and carried to certain stages of completion; others remained in the sketch-books, where again and again they reappear in different versions. Among them may be named the scenes from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, for one of which an arbour was made and in due time became covered with the evergreen honeysuckle planted for this picture. Another depicted Othello about to smother Desdemona, and for this a bedstead was

## UNFINISHED PICTURES

constructed, hung with old red satin damask curtains, and ornamented with elaborate carvings, moulded and gilded, remaining in the studio for many years awaiting its turn which never came.

Other canvases begun and never finished included the wrestling scene in *As You Like It*; the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*; "The Priest and the Great Lady," a version, in oil, of the Rothenburg water-colour; "Tristan and Isolde"; "The World Without" (a hermit in his cell, his ear close to a hole in the wall, intently listening to the confession of a knight in armour unseen by him); "The Dance by the Hayrick;" a series of designs from *The Scarlet Letter*; another series from Chaucer; the Burghers of Calais; Richard II. riding on a mule in Bolingbroke's triumphal procession through London; "The Lawn by the Orangery" (two ladies in white dresses and two white peacocks); and the pictures referred to in the letter to Charles Parsons of October 15th, 1893, already quoted, where he says: "I am writing in the most honestly egotistical vein, for I know you want to hear about me—about *us*, and I want to tell you about my series of designs for the *Decameron*, and for the 'Months,' and a large subject symbolical of the 'Dark Ages,' a great four-storied gibbet against a black sky, victims hanging in chains, birds of prey, etc. In the foreground a crowded road swarming with knights in armour and their squires, peasant girls and monks, beggars and pilgrims before a crucifix, all pushing, crowding, brawling in a great mass." But time was denied the artist for the completion of any one of these dreams.

At the beginning of the year Abbey was busy with his "Fiammetta's Song," for which, it is interesting to note, he made his first studies from the nude, using for a few days Mr. Sargent's Tite Street studio while its owner was at Morgan Hall. When in London for this purpose, in February, Abbey found time also to see all that was happening in the Bond Street and other Galleries, one of his companions being R. A. M. Stevenson, who shortly afterwards went down to Fairford on a visit, principally to see Mr. Sargent's Boston Library lunette. Among other visitors to Morgan Hall this spring were the late John Hay and Mrs. Hay and their daughter Helen.







FIAMMETTA'S SONG.

OIL.

Eight feet eight inches by four feet four inches.

1893-1894.

Now first published.

NOTE.—“Fiammetta's Song” is here reproduced by a photogravure from a negative made before this painting was exhibited in the Royal Academy. The painting remained in the artist's possession for three years, and from time to time was worked upon and much improved. In 1897 it was purchased by the late Mr. H. A. C. Taylor, of New York, who then commissioned two companion paintings, “A Poet” and “A Measure.” It is to be regretted that the owner refused, for this book, to give facilities for taking the negative required for the production of a good photogravure, all the more as the copyrights of two of this series of three had belonged to Abbey, for it would then have been possible to present here more adequately this phase of his art.

## IN SEARCH OF ROMANESQUE

In due course "Fiammetta's Song," 8 feet 9 inches by 4 feet 4 inches, was sent to the Academy, where its position, according to a postcard from Mr. W. L. Wyllie, A.R.A., was

"Line, centre, Room X"

—a nice example of artists' laconics—and where it gained much delighted attention.

Abbey had been hopeful of finishing the first half of his Boston frieze almost at once; but there were difficulties in the way. He felt the need of architectural studies for the Castle of the Grail—a panel 33 feet long—and finally decided to go forthwith to the South of France in search of early eleventh century Romanesque buildings for that purpose. He had already set up a small wooden model containing a forest of columns, that he might observe the effects of light upon them, but this was not enough. He needed Romanesque ornament, capitals, etc., to give it the flavour of the early eleventh century. "There existed," says James Fergusson in his *History of Architecture*, "a transition style properly called the Romanesque, which may be described as that modification of the Classical Roman form which was introduced between the reigns of Constantine and Justinian, and was avowedly an attempt to adapt Classical forms to Christian purposes." From the fifth to the eleventh century the Romanesque was but little removed from the debased Roman, but the late, fully developed Romanesque of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is in every sense an original style of great richness and dignity.

It was in order to find the best specimens of this style that the Abbeys and Mrs. Mead went abroad early in May. After a few days in Paris, they went on to Lyons, not forgetting that this was the birthplace of Puvis de Chavannes, who also was at work on decorations for the Boston Library, and there (among many other fine things in the town) they saw on the staircase of Le Palais des Arts his "Bois Sacré," and the two allegorical figures of the Rhone and the Saône, all of which are among his noblest works. It was a great disappointment to miss the wonderful journey down the Rhone to Avignon by boat, but being a fortnight too early they had to proceed

## LE PUY-EN-VELAYE

to Avignon by train. Avignon, however, had little to offer, the eleventh and twelfth century buildings having been so frequently restored, and practically rebuilt, that although there was plenty of Gothic the Romanesque had disappeared. Abbey's harvest of architectural studies or sketches was therefore small, but he found others. On one day, for example, while driving about the country beyond the walls, he made a very beautiful study of a very young olive orchard on a spring hillside, and on another of gorse on a long stretch of common, which he used for the pastel of "What the Shepherd Saw."

At Arles he worked in the Cathedral of St. Trophime and elsewhere, and driving one day to the famous ruin of the Abbey of Mont Majeur, about four miles from Arles, made a study of a subterranean chapel, which was used for "The World Without," the unfinished picture, begun soon after his return to Morgan Hall, which has been described above. At Nîmes he found very little, but at Aigues Mortes he made a study of the long straight road into the portal of the town which reappears in his picture "The Bridge," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1898. From Nîmes an excursion was made to Tarascon, with a diversion up the hills to the strange ruins of Les Baux.

In the Auvergne the country had been rich in the material desired, and at Le Puy-en-Velaye the party settled down. It is late in the day to describe this remarkable relic of antiquity; enough to say that to an artist of Abbey's sensitiveness it was at once a stimulus and a joy. Both in the cathedral and in its chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe pinnacled high on its rock he found inspiration and treasure.

But although the cathedral yielded so much and the chapel of St. Michel yielded so much, each in its own way, Le Puy was to do still more. Not yet had the particular details of the Castle of the Grail for which Abbey had left home disclosed themselves; but on one of those golden afternoons the search was rewarded, and all—as it should be—by chance. Abbey was in the Museum. A door stood open into a lumber room and, peeping within, he saw there a quantity of architectural remains. Entering and looking about among the debris he found several Romanesque stone capitals, the very things for his frieze. On interviewing the Director as to whether casts of

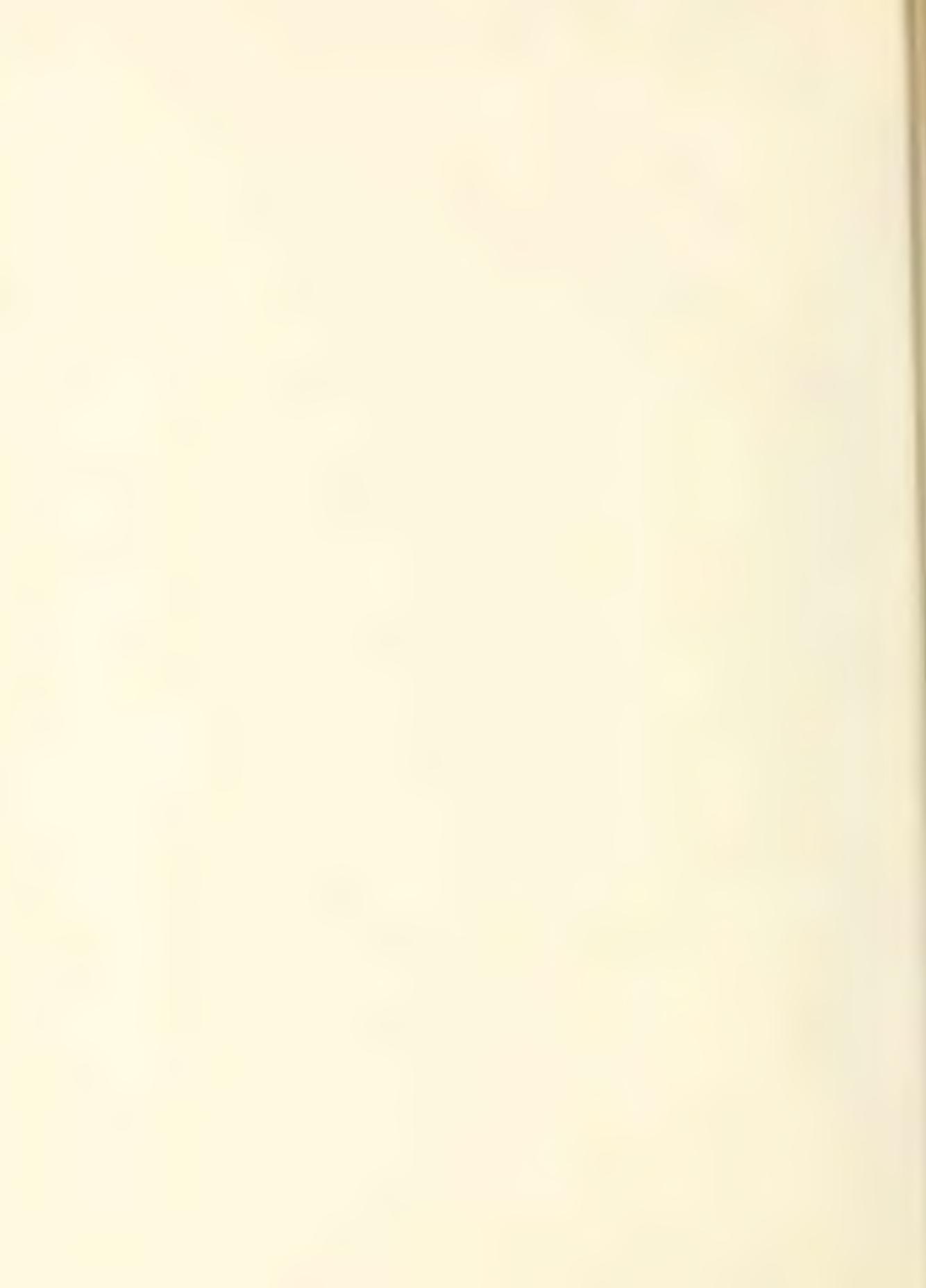
THE GOLDEN DISH.

PASTEL.

1894.







## INTERNATIONAL AMENITIES

these could be obtained he was told that none existed, but that possibly the Trustees would allow some to be made, and at the suggestion of the Director he went to the Town Library to find the Juge de Paix, who, usually, it seemed, was reading there after lunch. Here in a spacious room, a harmony of brown and red and blue and gold, the entire walls lined with books, sat three or four elderly, studious gentlemen, one of whom was the desired functionary. Nothing could have gone better! The case was presented. Monsieur required casts for his decoration of a library at Boston in America! How extremely interesting for Le Puy, so ancient, to contribute to the beauty of that distant city so modern! Assuredly the casts might be made, and the Judge himself would conduct Mr. and Mrs. Abbey to a moulagiste in the town—M. Pellegrini—and give the required sanction. And so it was done. Certain delays were, it is true, to be suffered, and little misunderstandings had to be cleared up before the casts could be dispatched, M. le Maire having a fear that some commercial use was to be made of them. But a letter from the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Frederic Leighton, written at Abbey's request on official notepaper, made everything all right, and the casts were duly received at Morgan Hall, and were painted into the great Castle of the Grail panel, and, at this moment, their active career at an end, they repose in the studio at Woodcote Manor.

Leighton, by the way, enjoyed the reciprocity of occasionally borrowing a model from his friend. We find, for example, in a letter written to Abbey in the following year, this request: "Will you be quite disgusted if I ask you to lend me Maude just *once* more? Of course, if it inconveniences you very much you must send me to the right-about." The President's next letter indicates what happened: "Maude says that you are nothing less than an angel for letting her come up—for that you are yourself driven for time. I am truly concerned to hear the latter, and I heartily concur in the former."

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that the fruitful year 1894, in addition to so much enterprise, was to see Abbey's first drawings in pastel. The origin of his experiments with this medium, of which he rapidly became a master, was the departure of Mrs.

## THE FIRST PASTEL

Mead for America, shortly after reaching Morgan Hall again from the French tour; for, in order to distract his wife's thoughts from this separation, Abbey, immediately on his return from the station, begged her to come into the studio and sit to him for a purpose that he had long had in mind. This she did; and, taking his chalks in his hand, he made that day, after one or two discarded attempts, the first of a fascinating series of pastels, "The Blue Door,"—based upon the sketch of a door of that colour in a garden wall seen and noted at Ravello in 1891. This pastel, which was never shown in England, but was sold in New York the following winter at his first pastel exhibition there, was the forerunner of many, and, indeed, by the end of the year Abbey, delighting in the sympathetic alliance of chalk, by whose aid so much that is joyous can be accomplished at a single sitting, had completed enough examples for the exhibition in question. Not, however, until the autumn of 1895 did he show any in England.

The fact that Abbey was no longer under any contract with Messrs. Harper having become known, there was now not a little competition for his black-and-white work, and an unfinished letter to Mr. Austin Dobson, in August of this year, shows that he was not neglecting this branch of his art. "I wonder," he says, "if you have an idea of what the general aspect of the '12 Good Rules,' with the print at the top, was? I want to stick it up in the inn, and although it will appear when printed about half the size of a postage stamp, perhaps, I'd like to get it right." In August the late R. W. Gilder, editor of the *Century Magazine*, wrote: "Our people are telegraphing you to-day asking for the first chance with your delightful project of illustrating *The Deserted Village*. . . . They would take the greatest possible pride in laying out the work to suit you. . . ." Abbey, however, had to decline. Immediately afterwards he was thus approached by Mr. E. L. Burlingame, the editor of *Scribner's*: "I have been greatly interested by hearing this summer that the expiration of old agreements made it possible now for works of yours to appear elsewhere than in *Harper's* where we have all been accustomed to look at it rather enviously these many years. Ever since this magazine was

THE BAILIFF.

PASTEL.

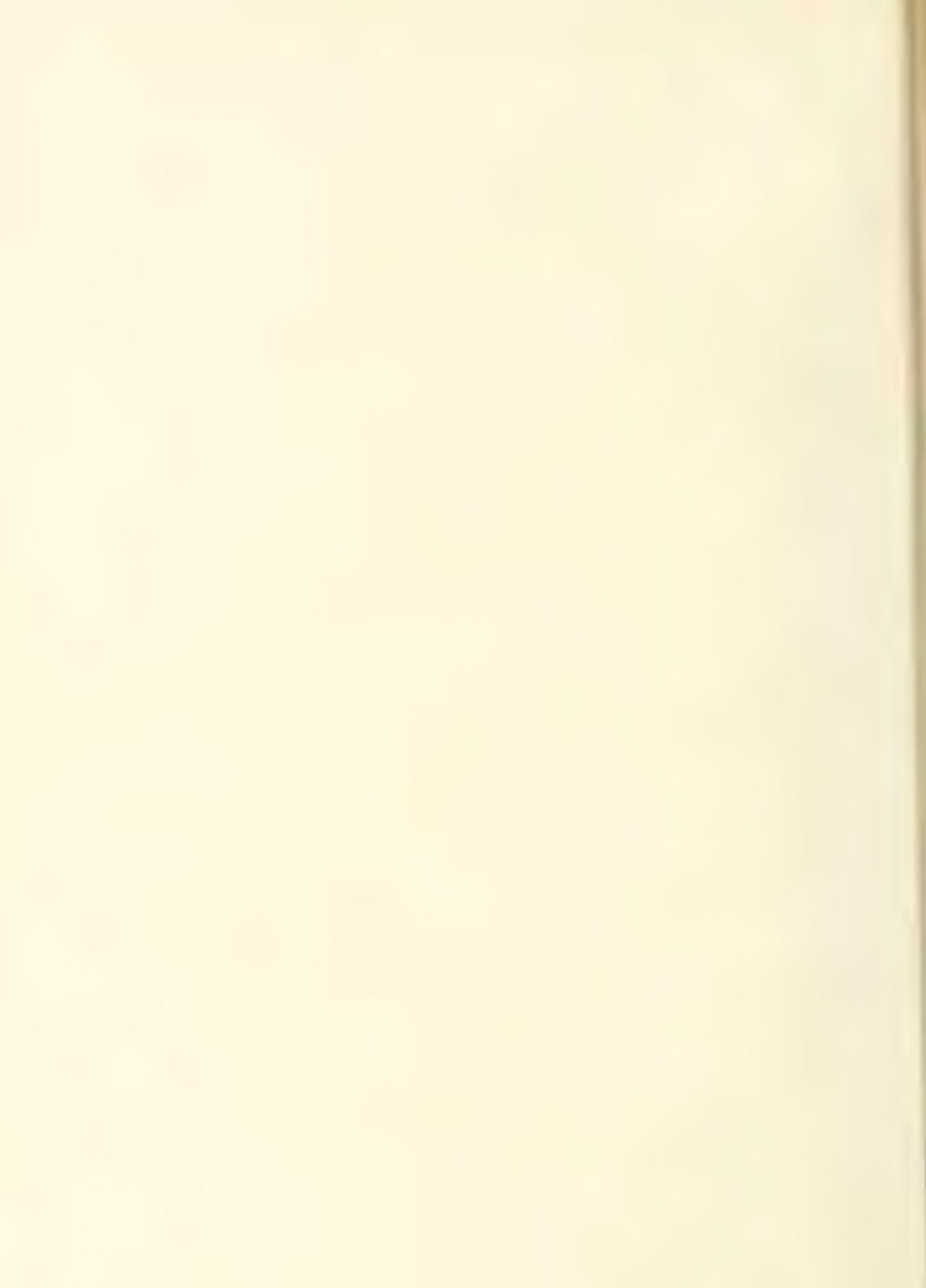
1894.

"THE GOOD NATURED MAN."

GOLDSMITH.







## WORK FOR SCRIBNER'S

begun it has been a matter of great regret to me (over and above the same feeling in the house at large, with its book projects) that we should be shut out from any chance at even asking your help in our plans. . . . It would be a very considerable pleasure to us if, now that you are free to do so, you would let us have a share in the work you might have in mind of your own initiative and let us also ask your help in magazine projects when opportunity offers. . . . We shall try in a short time to put before you some considerable undertaking of your own devising. Meanwhile there is one specific *little thing* in which your participation would gratify us very much. We are going to have in the next April number a series of full-page drawings of characteristic Easter scenes in different countries. Would you not contribute one to it, of whatever period you choose."—This request Abbey was glad to comply with, and his drawing—a pastel—was at once done, and was reproduced in the following April number as arranged, with its full title, transcribed by Abbey in Gothic lettering.\* This was his first contribution to this famous magazine, for when, in the middle eighteen-seventies, as a free-lance, he had made certain historical illustrations (as described in Chapter VI.) they were for *Scribner's Monthly*; and *Scribner's Monthly* and *Scribner's Magazine* were different publications. *Scribner's Monthly*, after a career of many years, disappeared in 1881, to be merged, by a business arrangement, henceforward in the *Century Magazine*. But in January, 1887, the firm of Scribners decided to begin afresh—with what distinction and success is too well known to need any emphasising here.

Among the visitors to Morgan Hall this summer (1894) were J. M. Swan, J. MacWhirter, J. W. North, R. W. Macbeth, Alfred Parsons, the Tademas, the Orchardsons, and Henry James; and it was during this visit that the novelist, who had become very dependent upon "new laid" eggs, and who found great difficulty in procuring them in London, spoke of the boon it would be to him to have at home a constant supply as notable for freshness as those that were being daily

\* "And moreover on Good Fryday the Queane and her Ladyes are to humble themselves crepyng to ye Crosse bearyng also in their handes dyvers gyftes of egges and apples and thus to signifie an humblynge of oureselfes unto Chryste before ye Crosse and ye Kissynge of it a memorie of our Redemption made upon ye Crosse."

## HENRY JAMES

set before him. It was at once recognised that, whoever went short, he must at all hazards be provided; and a box was specially constructed for the purpose of moving continually from the Gloucestershire poultry run to De Vere Gardens full, and from De Vere Gardens to the Gloucestershire poultry run, empty. As Henry James was the most punctilious of men, it followed that his acknowledgments of the benefits thus conferred upon him were of courtesy compact. Here are some of them: "The box has flown back to you, on the wings of all the (remotely) potential chickens of all the blessed eggs – this very day. It was *my* fault that my good woman didn't return it sooner.

*Good Woman* (the day it came): Shall I send it back to-day, sir?

*Modest Man*: Oh, wouldn't that look rather greedy? Keep it a day or two!

"So it was kept longer than I knew. But, as I say, it is flapping straight to Morgan Hall now; and it shall always boldly go, henceforth, the very right day. Not a solitary egg was broken on the mother's breast."

"The arrival of the eggs makes me believe in better things. I don't mean better than the eggs—there is nothing better—but better than most of the things we have been having. I shall bless you so long as they continue, and even when they have stopped—for the memory of them. But pray don't let them stop yet awhile. Make them, rather, begin more violently. They console me for certain disappointing events in America. Better the British hen than the American Eagle."

Here is a complete letter:

"34 De Vere Gardens, W.

"November 1st, 1894.

"DEAR MRS. ABBEY,

"We are very unhappy at the non-arrival of our eggs and are full of delicacy, at the same time, as to inquiring about them. Is the egg crop failing? Have the animals struck? Are we and they all victims of agricultural depression? I feared it, and if the disaster is at last upon us, won't you very kindly let me know the worst? I have been wanting yet fearing to write to you. To-day at last I seem to find courage just to twitch you by the hem of your garment. I seem also

## HENRY JAMES

to myself to have divined that you most naturally can't be any longer bothered by the bugbear of my breakfasts. It would indeed break down the patience of the angels. Nevertheless, a still, small hope does flicker in my breast. May we at any rate have news? News would be good, but eggs would be better. I shall hope for the best, but, after one tragic sob, I shall completely enter into the worst. With love to the Master.

“Yours, dear Mrs. Abbey, in affectionate suspense,  
“HENRY JAMES.”

From other letters: “Besides, I go back to London on Monday next, alas, after a month of blessed stillness and prettiness here—for two or three compulsory weeks. The consolatory egg will then do everything in the way of keeping me afloat. *Ergo*, lash up the hens even, if you have still any patience with the Henrys.”

“I am asking the Fata Morgana—Fairford Fairy—*i.e.*, the House-keeper aforesaid, to send me her little account, which shall receive my immediate attention.”

“It is a great satisfaction to be enabled to discharge a portion of my immense indebtedness to you. Please find herein postal orders to the amount of Twenty-Eight Shillings and Sixpence. Kindly suffer me to inflict on you the redundant ‘thruppence,’ for mere convenience’ sake, and bestow it on the most deserving and prolific hen. Please also believe that the eggs continue to be the brightest blessing of my sombre life.”

“It breaks my heart to have to tell you that the silver cord is loosed and the golden egg is broken. I go abroad on Saturday or Sunday and shall therefore have to be eggless for a while, but I shall never be away long now—I shall hear the cluck of your hens calling me back. Please tell them all they are to me. . . Yours and Abbey’s and Sargent’s and the whole barnyard’s and studio’s, affectionately.”

“More eggs? *Rather*, dear Mrs. Abbey! As many as you kindly can send me. I mean the beautiful box full (the companion of my household anxieties tells me it holds twenty-six), and as soon—and as often. The box—the twenty-six—*every week* would be ideal; and

## HENRY JAMES

now I am back in Britain for ever. ‘Abroad’ is a delusion from the point of view of the search for peace; I have spent four months in horribly missing it.”

One more of these letters, written later, after the Abbeys’ return from America in 1895:

“34 De Vere Gardens, W.  
“Friday.

“DEAR MRS. ABBEY,

“Why, this is most awfully, charmingly, troublingly graceful. My ‘help’ [referring to the preface for the ‘Grail’ exhibition brochure] last winter wasn’t worth any kind of recognition—it was help most lame and inadequate. But the spirit that moves you is noble, and I bow my head, over my egg-cup, in very grateful submission. I thank you with all my heart. Only do stick it on to the *next* bill—I am too painfully eager to seem to do *something* for my living. I feel more like a mere *rentier* than I thought I should ever feel in my life. We will talk of this under your ancestral beeches. Your note stimulates my desire to arrive. I don’t yet know when the Oxford episode takes place—about the 24th, I *think*. I should like to come for the 25th, the Sunday. But I must see—I will write again.

“Meanwhile don’t let your American gossip grow stale—or, above all, leak away. I wish I could bring *my* bicycle. But I can only bring the blue and green and yellow and black, and flaming scarlet, on my poor legs—lately acquired (at the Torquay Academy) in imperfectly dabbling in the rudiments.

“Yours both always,  
“HENRY JAMES.”

Largely under the stimulus of Alma Tadema’s enthusiasm, it was decided in the autumn of 1894 to hold in London an exhibition of the first half of the “Holy Grail” paintings before they were taken to America early in the New Year; and Tadema undertook to find a gallery suitable for such large canvases. In course of time he reported that the Conduit Street Gallery, where the Nineteenth Century Art Society exhibited, would do, and Mrs. Abbey hastened to London to secure it for a period in January, while the painting of King Arthur’s Round Table, which had been shown at the Chicago

## NEW YEAR'S CARD

World's Fair and was now in Boston, was cabled for to complete the set, and Abbey redoubled his efforts over the finishing touches to the remainder.

Thus ended the year, which saw the publication, in *Harper's Magazine*, of the illustrations to *A Winter's Tale*, in April, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, in December. The series was to be brought to a close in August, 1895, with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Among the many Christmas and New Year's cards, made by Abbey for his friends, here is one taken from a scrapbook which belonged to Alfred Parsons, inspired, perhaps, by the thought that sandwichmen within a few days were to carry their boards about London, advertising the exhibition of the "Holy Grail" paintings.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### FIRST "HOLY GRAIL" EXHIBITION AND THE PASTELS

1895 Aged 42-43

A Surprise for the Critics—In New York Again —The First Pastels—Contributions to *Scribner's*—Hopkinson Smithon Abbey—At Boston—St. Gaudens Again—Return to England—'The "Richard" Begun—At Kelmscott—Mr. Sargent Leaves Fairford  
—More Pastels—An Illustrated Bible—The "Comedies" in Book Form

**W**E come now to a critical year. Having made very few appearances before the public since *Old Songs* and *The Quiet Life* were issued in 1888 and 1889—the Comedies in *Harper's* and two pictures for the Academy being all he could spare time to complete, with the Boston commission demanding so much thought and labour—Abbey was now, in January, suddenly to re-enter the arena with five great imaginative mural paintings and, in the autumn, with a series of pastels every one of which showed a masterly use of his material and was a dream of beautiful colour.

The exhibition of the Grail frieze in London at the artist's own expense was something of a venture, for his bank account was running very low. Income from illustrations (black-and-white work) had, for the time, practically ceased, and the Boston work brought in no surplus. On the contrary, it meant a deficit. How could it be otherwise? The 7,000 dollars (£1,400) paid for the first half of the frieze—90 feet packed with life-sized figures based on careful studies of each figure in charcoal and chalk and in oil—had long since been anticipated and spent. During the first four Morgan Hall years the expenses of the studio, where nothing was spared, and where the motto was "Small in the studio, small work," had been enormous, involving as they did all the paraphernalia needed for work on this scale, scaffoldings, stretchers, books, costumes, stuffs, armour, casts, models, a thousand and one objects, to say nothing of the time required for the mastery of the details of the task and of the necessary journeyings abroad.

## THE "HOLY GRAIL" EXHIBITION

Abbey was still little known as a painter in oil. Neither "May-Day Morning" nor "Fiammetta's Song" had been sold. Both were large canvases: "Fiammetta's Song," being 8 feet long, demanded too great a wall space for the average house, which made it less saleable than a smaller work, and "May-Day Morning," although it had in fact been practically sold, was again on the artist's hands owing to the fact that it was 6 inches too long for the recess in which it was to hang; but neither now nor afterwards did Abbey yield to pressure to paint pictures of any size other than the subjects seemed to him to demand. He was bent upon delivering his message in his own language, and this was not the language of the so-called easel picture.\*

But the exhibition in London proved a wise measure; for although when the Abbeys sailed for America they carried with them the burden of a debt amounting to £1,600, in less than a year, thanks to the fillip now given to the painter's fame, the debt was paid in full. On the back of a small document, dated 1895, in Mrs. Abbey's writing, is the endorsement "Penniless but free," and free in this respect they remained ever after, although great economy (everywhere but in the studio) had still to be practised for some years to come.

The private view of the Holy Grail exhibition was on January 19th, 1895, and to those who knew Abbey only as a draughtsman in black-and-white the work shown there came as a revelation. It also immensely increased his reputation. What, however, meant more to one who never cared for publicity was the appreciation of his fellow artists. From Millais, for example, came at once this cordial note: "I must write a line to say what pleasure your work has given me. For years I have seen and admired your beautiful illustrations, and congratulate you on this larger undertaking."

In January, a week before the close of the exhibition, the Abbeys sailed for New York, taking with them the pastels, between forty and

\*As a matter of fact, with the exception of three paintings: "Fair is My Love," done for Messrs. Agnew's Exhibition of English Art (in 1901), and now in the Municipal Art Gallery of Preston; "The Bridge," now in the gallery at Capetown; and one, considerably larger—"Who is Silvia? What is she?"—now owned by Senator Clark, of New York, and his Diploma picture "The Lute Player," Abbey never painted anything smaller than the two paintings he first completed.

## THE PASTELS

fifty in number, the "May-Day Morning," "Fiammetta's Song," and the water-colour "An Attention." About ten days later Abbey's studio man, Walter Fisher, followed with the Grail canvases.

The exhibition in New York was on a different business basis from the exhibition in London, and there was not the same adventuresomeness about it. It was held in one of the galleries used by the American Art Association, which was much more satisfactory for the purpose than the London one; while in a smaller room were hung the two oil paintings and the pastels, "Fiammetta's Song" being placed in a frame specially designed by Stanford White. "An Attention" was reserved for the Spring Exhibition of the American Water-Colour Society. In the meantime a room in another part of the building had been placed at Abbey's disposal for a studio to be used as such as long as he remained in New York, and here he put the finishing touches to any pastels that needed them, and here many friends daily flocked to see him. Although this was a time of great financial depression in America (when art is the first to suffer) the public flocked in such crowds to the Holy Grail exhibition that at times it became impossible to move about, and during the entire period the galleries were always full, so that the managers thought it well to keep it open a week or more beyond the time arranged. Abbey's artistic success was not only immediate but beyond the highest expectations. Meanwhile *Harper's Weekly* devoted a double page to the reproduction of a Round Table panel, and a small volume was published by Messrs. R. H. Russell, a kind of handbook to the series, for which Abbey, while in the clutches of influenza, designed a poster.

The sale of "Fiammetta's Song" and "May-Day Morning" still tarried, but the pastels delighted spectators and found ready purchasers, and the reproduction rights in a selection of them were quickly secured by *Scribner's Magazine*, where they appeared in the August number accompanied by a pleasant, conversational appreciation of this new weapon in his friend's armoury by F. Hopkinson Smith, from which may be quoted these passages:

"You feel in them [the pastels] that when once he had clearly conveyed his idea he stopped short; that when by some dexterous use of

AN ATTENTION.

WATER-COLOUR.

Two feet six inches by one foot eight inches.

1894.







## F. HOPKINSON SMITH

the 'grit' of the medium, he had expressed the sheen on the round of the mandolin in 'The Girl in Red,' or caught the glint of gold on the dish in 'The Golden Dish,' he threw the bit of chalk aside, knowing that no added touch could improve, just as did that other painter, the late William Hunt, who would say to his pupils, whenever a morsel of grey paper escaped the wash of the brush and by some lucky chance was the exact tone needed 'Leave it. Thank God, and pass on, you can never better it. . . .'

"Abbey never fails to rise above the plane of the mere illustrator—that of the man who illustrates the text and is content. He has always done more than this, he has worked as the poets do. He has chosen themes which other men have used, stories they have told, men and women they have pictured. About these has played the fire of his own fine imagination, transforming and ennobling them.

"Where Goldsmith leaves off Abbey begins. It is always something of himself that he adds, and it is always a refinement of the theme, never a touch that degrades.

"If he gives us 'Portia' it is not only the woman of affairs, the wise counsellor, but the merry triumph beneath it all that shows at a glance her enjoyment of the humour of her escapade."

The exhibition in New York closed on March 17th, and as soon as possible the "Holy Grail" panels were removed to Boston, where the Abbeys became the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild at 191 Commonwealth Avenue. In April Abbey was busy in superintending the placing of his paintings on the walls of the Delivery Room of the Public Library, to which the canvases were fixed by a process called maroufage. The top of the canvas was tacked along the top of the wall space, and the canvas was then rolled up to the tacking. The wall beneath was covered with a thick coat of white lead, and the canvas (already painted on the back with red lead) was then turned back upon this white lead and rolled on to the wall as if it were wall paper, and, like wall paper, when dry becoming as solidly fixed to the wall as if it were the wall itself. Unfortunately there were many pinholes in the canvases, where drawing pins had been stuck to hold the various studies required for the work while in progress,

## FIXING THE FRIEZE

and the troublesome pinholes had, in some cases, grown beyond the size of an ordinary pin, and through each hole, however tiny, oozed the white lead; and these spots had all to be removed or touched up, as had also the spots made by the white-leaded hands of the workmen. This trouble, however, was minimised in the future by greater care in the studio when the work was in progress, and greater care on the part of the workmen.

But there were other more important things that Abbey learned from this, his first experience in seeing a decorative work of his own on the wall of the room for which it had been painted, at its proper height, the bottom of the frieze being 11 feet from the floor. In the 24 feet panel of Arthur's Round Table were forty or more angels, each angel with a golden halo, and, as the painter had feared would be the case, these halos high up in the dark, close to the ceiling, told as black. After consultation with Stanford White, he decided to build them up in low relief, and when this was done and they had been regilded, dark as it was, they told as lights and gleamed and glinted in their true places. The halo of the Grail Angel bringing sustenance to the child Galahad, in the first panel, was treated in the same way, and with the same satisfactory result. There were other details which did not tell as Abbey had intended, and upon which he worked before the scaffolding was taken down; but so much did he learn on this occasion that when, at the close of the year 1901, he brought the second half of the frieze to the Library it needed the minimum of alteration.

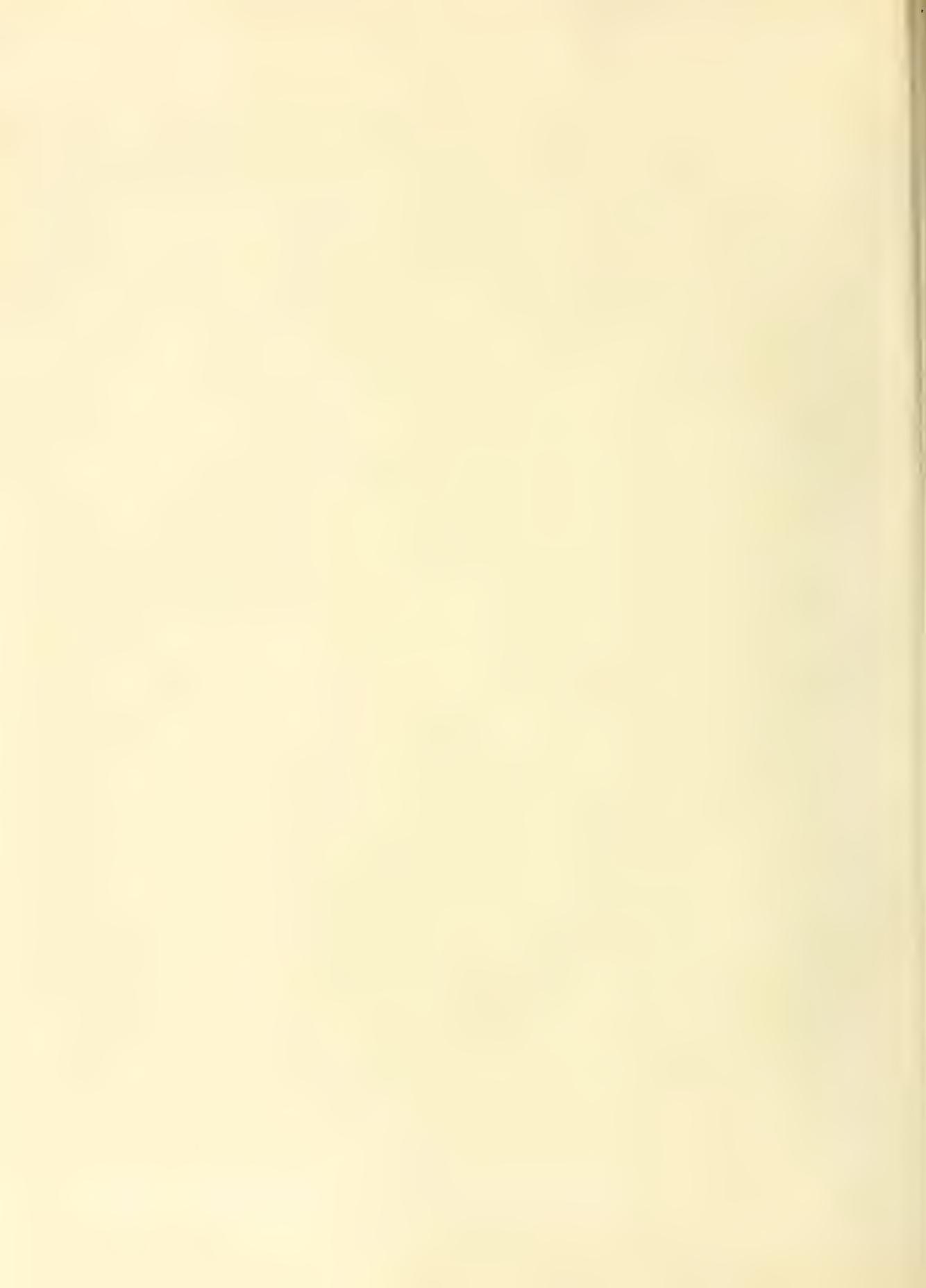
Writing to Alma Tadema from New York on May 18th, Abbey says: "We had a great time in Boston. I wish you could see the things in place—John's looks stunning. You see it from a great distance below, and he has gilded the whole interior of the space and it is all lighted by strong reflected light; it gains tremendously and as a composition is for the first time complete. We both suffered, as I have said, fearfully from the heat, working on scaffolds under the ceiling—I in a room crowded all day with people all breathing hard. I think my affair looks better than it ever did before—although it has masses of detail which tell as nothing. I am pleased that it looks right in

A STUDY IN PASTEL.

1895.







## THE "RICHARD" BEGUN

scale. I have learned a great deal seeing it in place and shall do the rest of it with greater confidence. Masses of tones tell, not detail, nor light and shade."

Under the date of May 27th, I find a note from St. Gaudens: "While you're not mentioning things, don't mention my Sherman group you saw the other day. I've been keeping it shady and meant to spring it on the fellows 'suddenly' some day, but d—n you, with that gun eye of yours, you got on to it before I knew where I was at."

After being away for nearly six months, the Abbeys reached home early in June, and it was not long before a new picture, which, with more pastels and the continuation of the Holy Grail frieze, was chiefly to occupy the rest of the year, was begun. A letter from Abbey to his brother on August 5th, tells some of the news: "I have been working very hard ever since our return. I am to have an exhibition of pastels here in October or November—October 26th I believe the date is—and they want more than I am afraid I can finish. I have begun, too, a largish picture—same size as 'Fiammetta'—'Richard III. and Lady Anne,' 8 feet 9 inches by 4 feet 4 inches. The thread of the 'Grail' things, too, I am gradually taking up, and two canvases, one 11 feet and the other 16 feet, are mapped out. I am trying to get a grey horse, but there doesn't seem to be the right sort of one in the neighbourhood—I don't mean to ride, but to paint from...."

A number of letters which Mrs. Abbey was now writing to her mother, and which fortunately have been preserved, help us to more intimate knowledge of Morgan Hall life at this time, and in the two or three years to follow. They tell us that on June 19th Abbey and his wife went to Paris, where they met again Whistler and Mrs. Whistler, arranged with Dujardin to make copperplates of some of the *Deserted Village* drawings, in case the artist himself decided to publish them, and saw and enthusiastically admired Puvis de Chavannes' decorations for the Boston Library.

Work was steady all the summer, but Abbey found time for cricket practice and base-ball practice in the afternoons, and he went over to Henley for the regatta, but was spared the humiliation of witnessing Cornell's defeat. Meanwhile Abbey and Mrs. Abbey were both

## J. S. SARGENT

learning the bicycle, and one of their early excursions was in August to Kelmscott to the Morrises. Mrs. Abbey writes: "We had tea first and then went into the garden, which was like fairy land. They are to give us some roots in the autumn."

In the same month we learn that Abbey was much occupied with improvements to the "Fiammetta." Also "he has done several lovely new pastels for the London Exhibition at the end of October." In September: "We went to see Sargent yesterday afternoon, saw the sketches and Gothic stuffs he brought back with him from Spain—all very fine. He is working at the design for his second ceiling, as yet only on paper in charcoal, but he has decided to paint it in London. There are so many figures in it, and he will need such a variety of models, and will want to look up things so constantly in the National Gallery and British Museum that he thinks it will hamper him to be in Fairford, so he will probably not be with us this year at all. He expects to do the lunette in Fairford, but that will not be for a long time, for he will probably not begin it until the ceiling is well advanced. [As a matter of fact, Mr. Sargent did not work in the Morgan Hall studio again.] Ned has done a number of sketches—several in pastel—for the 'Castle of the Maidens,' with which Tademawas delighted. Then too, he is working on 'Richard III.' He is, of course, very disappointed that Sargent is not coming down this winter, and I am very, very sorry. Sargent must be in town all through October and November to teach in the Academy Schools.

"September 20th.—We dined with Sargent at the Indian Exhibition the last night we were in London and had a jolly time. He is coming down to-morrow for Sunday. We had had a perfectly lovely day—had spent the entire day at Westminster Abbey and in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum looking up data for the 'Richard III.' picture. Ned is tremendously interested in it.

"September 28th.—Ned has been doing pastels and working on his 'Richard III.' Sargent was immensely impressed with it—thinks it the very best picture Ned has done—got Ned to have it brought from the studio and hang it on the wall of the dining-room, where it remained for a few days. He thinks he knows the very model for the







BOB ACRES AND DAVID.

PASTEL.

Two feet three and a half inches by one foot eight and a half inches.

1895.

"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

SHERIDAN.

## THE NEW PASTELS

Lady Anne's face, a girl with good colour, who has never sat, who came to see him the other day. He will send her down.

"October 11th.—Ned is very busy getting ready for the pastel exhibition, and has designed a card for the private view.

"October 22nd.—Ned has had three lambs in the studio all day—hurled in. He is doing a pastel 'What the Shepherd saw.' We go up to town to-morrow to get ready for the Private View."

The pastels were duly exhibited—forty-eight in number—at the Gallery of the Fine Art Society, the private view day being October 26th. To the catalogue Mr. Pennell contributed a preface, in which he said that they were an evidence not only of the artist's "perfect command of material, but of the perfect grace, the exquisite refinement, which he throws around every subject he touches. Simple as are the means he uses, and direct as is the treatment, the result is substantial, solid and real. Just a few touches and ladies, that Gainsborough or Reynolds saw, pass across lawns, over which the shadows chase each other, or emerge for a moment into a sunlit space. . . . In every one of these pictures there is the most perfect sense of movement, the most perfect feeling that the next moment the trees will sway or the clouds will pass, and what is shadow will be sunshine, and where the light sparkles will be quiet shade. . . .

"What other painter is there who makes one feel that plays are real? When did Sir Anthony Absolute and Sir Lucius O'Trigger swagger so pompously? And when upon the stage was David so humble or Bob Acres so fine? . . . There is no parade of these things. There they are. And yet when you come to look at them, they are put down with a touch, but that is right. How can one write about works that are altogether beautiful?"

Artistically this exhibition was an immense success, and it materially increased Abbey's reputation. But financially it was an absolute failure, and only three pastels were sold. The public was not accustomed to this medium. But, just as in the past he did pioneer work as an illustrator in black-and-white, and "showed the way," so now Abbey was a pioneer, and no long time passed before pastels became the vogue, and in 1898 the Pastel Society was founded—to

## AN AMERICAN HONOUR

hold annual exhibitions in the Royal Institute Galleries, Piccadilly. Of the Society Abbey became an honoured member, although he had no direct hand in its formation.

London, however, stood alone in its reluctance to buy. For when a few months later Abbey had a second exhibition of pastels in New York, consisting of the unsold English ones and some others, a thousand pounds' worth were bought on the opening day.

From Mrs. Abbey's letters again: "November 8th.—Ned had a letter to-day from the President of the Amsterdam Society of Arts, 'Ars et Amicitia,' asking him to do five drawings—black-and-white—subjects to be taken from the Bible, and offering four hundred guineas for the five drawings. They are to bring out an illustrated edition of the Bible, and the 'swells' of all nations are to do the illustrations. Here Leighton, Millais, Tadema, Sargent, and Ned have been asked; I don't know who else. Ned has also received a notice that he has been elected an honorary member of the American Society of Architects. He thinks this a great honour."

At the end of the same month, on a visit to London for Varnishing Day at the old Water-Colour Society, where Abbey was exhibiting "A Quiet Conscience," Mrs. Abbey writes: "After a couple of hours at the National Gallery, we had lunch at the Café Royal and then went to the 'Tower' to look up material connected with the time of Henry VI. and Richard III., but found very little there. Then to a shop in 'Little Britain,' not far from St. Paul's, where they have all sorts of theatrical stuffs, spangles, jewels, veils, etc.; went to look up things for the 'Castle of the Maidens'; got a beautiful gold veil and a gross of rings to be used in making a suit of armour for one of the knights fighting on the drawbridge in front of the Castle of the Maidens."

On December 13th: "Ned's *Shakespeare* has just arrived, the four volumes, and everyone was deeply interested in looking it over. On the whole it is a very beautiful book, much better than he expected it would be, but nothing to compare with what Ned wanted if the limited edition had been got out."—This refers to the publication of the Comedies in book-form at the end of this year (the book is dated

A QUIET CONSCIENCE.

WATER COLOUR.

1895.







## THE COMEDIES PUBLISHED

1896) in four volumes, the production of which Abbey's old associate, Anthony, had supervised for Messrs. Harper. The title page runs thus: *The Comedies of William Shakespeare: With many drawings by Edwin A. Abbey*; and the presentation is of the simplest—merely Shakespeare's text and Abbey's drawings, no introduction and no preface.

The last passage to be quoted from Mrs. Abbey's letters in this year (1895) runs thus: "We had a visit from Onslow Ford. He is delighted with Ned's picture, and has asked Ned to let him do a bust of him, so Ned will sit to him in the spring."

During 1895 Abbey was elected an Associate of the Royal Water-Colour Society, to which, in the following year, he sent "An Attention," and later this was purchased by Mr. D. D. Robertson for a wedding present to his wife, and is now in the possession of Mrs. Robertson, of 3 Upper Cheyne Row, London.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### A.R.A. AND THE “RICHARD”

1896 Aged 43

Election as an Associate—Leighton’s Death—Portrait by G. F. Watts—A Drawing for *Ivanhoe*—John Hay—The Drawings for the “Comedies” in Paris—A Philadelphian Competition—The Private View and a Triumph—“Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and the Lady Anne”—Alfred Gilbert—*Punch*

THE chief event of 1896 was Abbey’s election at the age of forty-three, to an Associateship of the Royal Academy. This was on February 16th. As we have seen, he had but twice exhibited oil paintings there—the “May-Day Morning” in 1890, and “Fiammetta’s Song” in 1894, so that, since the Academy in its elections does not take note of water-colour or black-and-white, it may be gathered that the Holy Grail frieze, fortified perhaps by the pastels, had made a great impression on his fellow artists. How brilliantly he was to justify their choice of him the next Spring exhibition was to show.

A large number of letters and telegrams of congratulation were sent to the new A.R.A., all illustrating the affectionate regard, as well as esteem, in which he was held by those already among the elect, and their pleasure in welcoming him to their company.

Mr. Solomon J. Solomon, the other new Associate, paid a charming compliment: “Allow me to congratulate you, and tell you how proud I am to be in such distinguished company. My election is a promotion for me. Yours is a promotion for the Academy.”

Alfred Parsons wrote the same evening from the Arts Club, where a fitting revel was in progress: “No one more heartily rejoices in your election to-night than I do.... We are drinking your health in the wine of the Champagne district, and if I don’t return to J.W. North and John Sargent and Boughton and Frank Millet and Gilbert and Couch (who is here with me) I shall not get my whack, so good-night. My love to you.” And to Mrs. Abbey he said: “Let me congratulate you too... and though he could not have come to the front so quickly

## J. E. MILLAIS

in a new line without his wonderful genius, it is largely the result of the impetus and the help which you have given him."

Mr. Sargent, who had first telegraphed to Fairford, wrote later: "I have just wired you the joyful news, and have been filling glasses for you here and very inadequately replied in your name. Everybody is delighted; lots of men told me to send you messages, and I have been shaking hands with all around as if I was the new Associate."\*

There was no President of the Royal Academy at that moment, for Leighton had just died, and Millais, who was already under the dark cloud of the malady to which he was to succumb in August, had not been officially elected. Millais wrote thus to the new Associate: "First let me congratulate the Academy, and then you, on your election into the body. We were all *delighted*." And that no one was more delighted than Millais himself we may feel certain, for in the biography of the great painter by his son, Mr. John Guille Millais, is this passage, to which an allusion has already been made: "As to Edwin Abbey's illustrations in *Harper's Magazine* of the old English songs and the plays of Shakespeare, his admiration knew no bounds. I think I may say that he frequently urged on the Academicians Abbey's right to become an Associate even on the merits of these drawings alone; and that he has now attained that honour is perhaps due, in some measure at least, to Millais's championship in former years."

The most interesting of Abbey's letters—at any rate, of those that have been preserved—in reply to congratulations, is one to his brother. "I am very proud," he says, "to have been singled out among so many aspirants to the honour. . . . Leighton's death was a great personal loss. I had no kinder friend, and I had a very nice note from him only a few days before his death. He was really an extraordinary man—methodical to the last degree—and got through an enormous amount of work in consequence. In the House of Lords he would have been invaluable."—Leighton, it will be remembered, had been raised to the peerage only a few days before his fatal seizure. One of his last letters was to Abbey thanking him for his good wishes.

\* From Edward Onslow Ford, the sculptor, came this superficially cryptic, but easily decipherable, telegram: "U.R.A.R.A.H.U.R.R.A.E.O.F."

## G. F. WATTS

Mrs. Abbey's letters to Mrs. Mead again come to our assistance. On January 12th she writes: "Ned has been painting on the 'Richard' picture, and now he is doing in pen and ink Gideon, with the angel of the Lord, bringing fire out of the rock he has smitten. This is for the Bible illustration."

On January 21st: "Ned at work on the 'Castle of the Maidens' today.... Charles Dana Gibson and his wife came down on Saturday and spent Sunday."

A letter arriving at this time from G. F. Watts to Mrs. Abbey says: "We have constantly been on the point of asking you and Mr. Abbey to come here for a night or two, but something has always cropped up to prevent it. I am so terribly in the habit of getting ill—not seriously, but enough to make visiting or inviting out of the question. As to visiting, my life is positively bounded by my studio, where I still hope to do my best work yet; presumptuous, perhaps, as, in a few days, if I continue in life, I shall reach my eightieth year! . . . I have heard a great deal of Mr. Abbey's work—it is enormously thought of. Give him my very best regards and remind him that he is to sit for me to finish the drawing begun or for a new and better one!"

Another letter from Watts on the 24th covers much the same ground, but has this interesting addition: "I shall have some things to show. Whether they will be cared for or not, I am not equally certain, but I am putting out all my strength, and hoping to do better things yet than I have done. But, within a few days of my eightieth year, though not too late for effort—never too late for that—it may be too late to hope for improvement; but I don't think so."—Watts lived on until 1904.

These letters refer to the charcoal head of Abbey which Watts had made at Little Holland House, in October, 1893, and with which he was not quite satisfied: a belated wedding present from "Signor" "to dear Gertrude," his "American sister." As it happened, no new one was ever done.

In her next letter Mrs. Abbey writes: "Ned is working against time to get the 'Rebecca and Rowena' drawing off to *Scribner's* by this post"—the reference being to a request from Mr. Burlingame







THE QUEEN IN "HAMLET."

PASTEL.

1895.

## JOHN HAY

that Abbey would contribute to a series of "Scenes from the Great Novels" which the magazine was to publish. Abbey chose *Ivanhoe*. Vierge illustrated *The Three Musketeers*.

On February 11th John Hay wrote from Washington. "I have gone twice to Boston to look at your 'Galahad' series, with new pleasure and admiration each time. You have done the job, old man. You have made your unquestionable place in the art of this generation. And the Shakespeare drawings! I saw a few of them at a picture shop here. They are bully, as my children say, in a language which I used to think hideous, but which seems to be current now in the best society. Whom do they belong to? and are they ever accessible to the public? I covet some of them; my fingers itch for them. I have the book, of course, and take great comfort in it, but the drawings have a grandiosity and style that are extremely captivating. We thought of you very often when we were in Italy—particularly in the Giusti Gardens at Verona. . . . The choice of the Laureate [the late Alfred Austin] was amazing—passing over Swinburne and Morris, who were, of course, out of the question, but who should at least have kept the place vacant awhile. There was Kipling, a glorious young cockerel with a crow like a spring morning."

Three or four weeks later, when Abbey's second exhibition of pastels was opened at Avery's in New York, Hay had the opportunity of buying another example of his friend's art. Writing to tell the news, he says: "Your glorious pastel 'The Queen in Hamlet' hangs in front of me while I write. It fills the room with splendour. . . . Helen fell in love with it—me too."

Meanwhile in Paris an exhibition was being held of the original drawings for the Comedies—in Salle XI of the Palais des Beaux Arts. Writing to his brother Abbey says (on March 25th) that "they were hung to-day, amid the cheers of the populace—flag-flying, guns going forth, babies crying, churches closed, etc. I was not there to see."

From Mrs. Abbey's letters we learn that early in this year Abbey broke the rule which he had long since laid down for himself, not to enter for competitions. Having a rooted belief that from the beginning of the Renaissance, when Ghiberti instead of Brunelleschi be-

## A COMPETITIVE DESIGN

came the successful competitor for the execution of the gates of the Baptistry of San Giovanni in Florence, down to his own day, competitions usually resulted in the selection of an inferior design, he had set his face against them. But when the call came to compete for the decoration of the Common Council Hall of Philadelphia the desire to do something for his native city, and to set his mark upon it, overcame his reluctance, and, though pressed for time, as he was trying to finish his "Richard" for the Academy at the end of March, he began to make designs. The subject which he chose was the Spirit of Religious Liberty leading great ships across the sea to America, accompanied by her sisters, Faith and Hope. A letter of Mrs. Abbey's says: "Sargent thinks Ned's design is stunning, and said that, of course, the work would be awarded to him, but I doubt if the jury will know how good the design is. I heard Sargent tell Ned that he thought it the finest notion of a decoration he had ever seen."

It may be stated here that Abbey was not successful, the winner of the competition being Joseph Decamp. Writing to his brother he says: "That's all right. I had no business to go in for the thing anyway. If I'd got it to do it would have been quite two years before I could possibly have touched it. I'll write to you shortly what to do with the sketches. Jo Decamp is a good chap, and hasn't had much luck. He is an excellent draughtsman of the nude." As a matter of fact what Philadelphia rejected Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, is now proud to own, for the main lines of the design reappear in one of the most beautiful of Abbey's decorations there.

All this while the "Richard" was nearing completion: but notwithstanding its vicissitudes. Owing to the immense amount of detail to be kept in mind Abbey had, by an oversight, painted the gentlemen's halberds with their heads upwards, but arms are reversed at funerals, and it was therefore necessary to scrape these out and repaint them heads downwards. There were difficulties also with the Lady Anne's dress, the elaborately embroidered front of which, composed entirely of the coat-of-arms, had to be remade and painted a second time, the first coat having belonged to a wrong branch of her family. Then the model, whom Abbey was using for the Lady Anne's face,

## THE "RICHARD" COMPLETED

proved a disappointment, and, after painting from her daily for a month, he had to make a change. Scraping out all he had done, he began again with a new model, this time completing in a single sitting the face as it now is. In March he took the picture to Mr. Sargent's studio in the Fulham Road for a few days, whence it was moved for Show Sunday to the same artist's studio at 33 Tite Street. During the fortnight spent in town Abbey called on "over fifty R.A.'s and A.R.A.'s," and thus did his duty as a new Associate.

From Mrs. Abbey's letters again: "April 14th.—Sargent and McKim came down on Saturday. . . . We have talked and talked and talked and talked, and we had much delightful music. We all went over to the Hendersons on Sunday. Ned wanted McKim to see the Burne-Joneses [the Briar Rose] in their drawing-room. Ned would like to do a room one day."—This was at Buscot Park, the seat of Sir Alexander Henderson, now Lord Faringdon, and the reference is to Abbey's desire, expressed in a letter to McKim quoted in a previous chapter, to paint subjects from Boccaccio for the walls of some spacious and gracious apartment.

The letter continues: "Next week Ned's Varnishing Days begin. We are going up to town on our bicycles, ninety-one miles by road. . . . Mitchell goes by train with the luggage."—Mitchell, who has not before been mentioned, was a devoted maid of the house upon whose ministrations not a little of its comfort depended. She is still with Mrs. Abbey. Among her treasured souvenirs of her late master is an oil study for the kneeling Galahad in one of the Grail series.

Of Varnishing Day we hear from Abbey himself in a letter to his brother: "The members have three days and the outsiders one, which makes four altogether. One sees people one never sees on any other occasion. Old T.S. Cooper—aged 93—a remarkable relic—who paints better than he ever did; which isn't remarkable as an artistic result, but as mere handiwork extraordinary. Poor Millais, who is slowly dying of cancer in his throat, walked round the exhibition one day—I dare say I shall never see him again. They say my picture has made a hit—which is a gratifying thing in such a big show. . . . We had a cricket match yesterday—an eleven of painters

## A TRIUMPH

versus Chelsea Arts Club. I did well: first ball took me in the ribs, and ran myself out on a measly snick in the slips off the next; long-stopped for the fast bowler, and let nine byes and made one catch. A great day. I'm black and blue in many places. . . .”

And so we come to the opening of the Academy and Abbey's first appearance on its walls as an A.R.A.

Mrs. Abbey's next letter to her mother tells the great news: “May 1st.—This has been ‘Private View’ day. Ned’s ‘Richard’ has been the picture of the year. We have had a perfect ovation. . . . He would have had his head turned if it were possible to turn it, but it is not possible.” If there had been any doubt in the Academy’s mind as to whether it had acted wisely in choosing Abbey as an Associate—and probably there was none—it was instantly dispelled by this contribution, which enchanted everyone, both artist and amateur.\* For not only was the “Richard” masterly in execution but it interpreted the national poet in one of his greatest ironical moments—when, even as the funeral procession of the late King, Henry VI., passed on its way from the Tower to Chertsey, the Duke of Gloucester (afterwards Richard III.) pressed his fantastic love-making on the Lady Anne. The actual lines accompanying the canvas were these:

Was ever Woman in this humour woo'd?

Was ever Woman in this humour won?

RICHARD III., ACT I., SC. 2.

Among the tributes from fellow artists let the following letter from

\*Mr. *Punch* in his praise of the picture packed so many puns into one paragraph that he should have been fined for overcrowding. Thus: “No. 616. *Richard, Duke of Gloucester and the Lady Anne*. Another title: *Dick and Anne, or the Double Gloucester, who thinks himself quite the Cheese, and the Lady who has just lost a Sovereign*. Had the artist needed a line of popular verse, he would have used, ‘Dick awry! Dick awry! Dock!’ For if ever villain ought to have ended in the dock and been found guilty it was that accomplished scoundrel, ‘afterwards Richard the Third.’ A marvellous work by Edwin A. Abbey, A.R.A. This will be the talk of the public. The scene is in London, probably in the vicinity of Westminster, the situation being from *Richard the Third*, Act I., Scene 2, and will entitle the American artist to be remembered ever after as ‘Westminster Abbey.’ This is the picture of the year. Most certainly it is the very Abbeyest of ‘Abbey Thoughts.’” *Punch* also brought together in one drawing some of the principals in the various chief pictures of the year, and showed Anne advancing upon the German Kaiser (extracted from Mr. Cope’s portrait) and followed by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain (extracted from Mr. Sargent’s).

RICHARD DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND THE LADY ANNE.

OIL.

Eight feet eight inches by four feet four inches.

1905-1906.

"RICHARD III," ACT I, SCENE II.







## ALFRED GILBERT

Alfred Gilbert, the sculptor, be quoted: "16 Maida Vale, W.  
"DEAR MRS. ABBEY. "May 1st, 1896.

"You should be the proudest woman on earth, for your dear little husband has made all his little brethren proud of him—and justly so. Our 'Black and White' American cousin has proved himself a great colourist, a great realist, and an idealist second to none. His picture is beautiful and all are proud of it, but no one delights in it more than

"Yours very sincerely,

"ALFRED GILBERT."

The "Richard" was sold before the exhibition to the late Mr. McCulloch, and after his death was shown again, at a Winter Exhibition, at Burlington House, with the rest of his collection. Mr. McCulloch had been unwilling to allow it to go to the Paris Exhibition of 1900, much to Abbey's disappointment, but after McCulloch's death it was exhibited at the Salon, and, in 1911, it took its place in the British Section of the International Exhibition in Rome, and later, in 1911-1912, it was hung among a selection of Abbey's work in the Memorial Exhibition at Burlington House.

The last time that the public had a chance to see the Duke of Gloucester in his bizarre courtship was at Christie's in May, 1913, when the McCulloch treasures were sold. The sale was on May 23rd, 29th, and 30th, and Abbey's two pictures—this and the painting from *King Lear*—opened the second day. The "Richard" is now in Mrs. Abbey's possession. The painting from *King Lear* belongs to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. McCulloch originally bought the "Richard" for £1,600, including the copyright, but he sold the copyright for £300, when an etching was made from it by Leopold Flameng. At Christie's this picture was sold for £5,670. For the painting from *Lear* McCulloch paid £2,500, and at Christie's it brought £5,040.

To the 1896 Academy Abbey sent also two black-and-white drawings "Lorenzo and Jessica" and "Sweet Nelly, my heart's delight."

## CHAPTER XXX

### TWO VISITS TO AMERICA

1896 (continued)—1897 Aged 44–45

Death of Mrs. Whistler—The Blacksmith's Honour—John Hay—Mrs. Mead's Illness—Millais' Funeral—The Legion of Honour—The Amsterdam Bible—Death of Reinhart—The "Pavane" and "Hamlet"—Abbey in New York—A Visit to Paris and Chartres—The Yale Degree—Alma Tadema—Sir John Gilbert—A Visit to Cambridge—E. J. Gregory—Mrs. Mead's Death

On the day after the 1896 Academy opened the Abbeys left for Paris, stopping both at Amiens and at Rouen for a night. In Paris they saw the Salon, with another of Puvis de Chavannes' decorations for the Boston Library, Abbey's Shakespeare drawings, and a Venetian robe of signal splendour, to which Mrs. Abbey thus refers in one of her letters: "One end of the building in which the Salon pictures are hung is devoted to Decorative Arts. Very few people seem to go there, but we go every year. This time we saw in a glass case a splendid red damask Venetian senator's robe of the sixteenth century. Ned needs precisely such a robe. We thought it just possible they would let us take it out of its case to see how it was made. We applied to the Director of the Museum, who not only let us have it out, but allowed us to cut the pattern...."

On returning home they found the announcement of the death of Whistler's wife. In response to a letter of sympathy, the artist wrote:

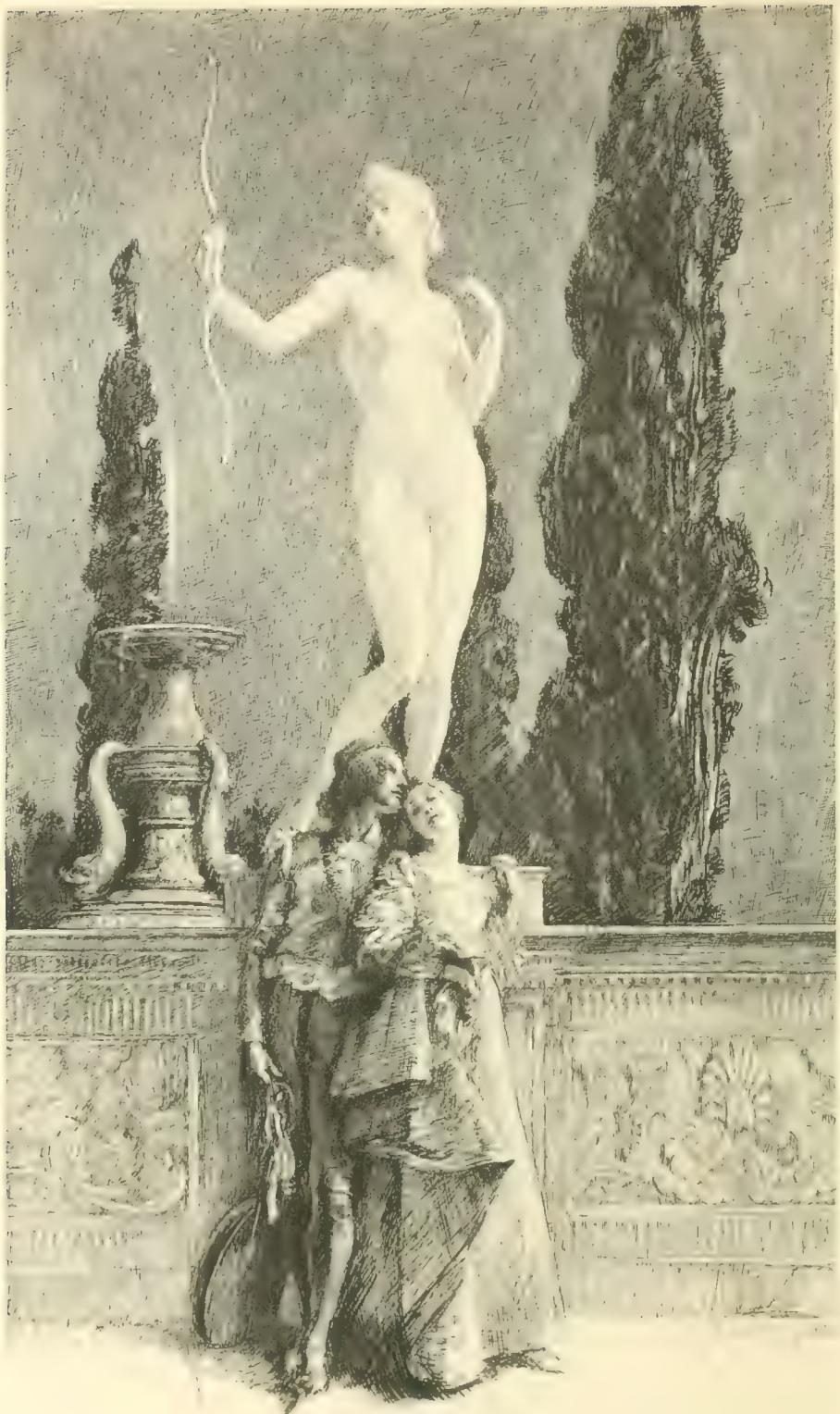
"MY DEAR KIND FRIENDS,

"You will know, I am sure, that though I cannot well write many words to you, I was much touched by your letter.

"You have seen us in our home and can understand that, alone, I am but a forlorn reminder of the brightness that charmed you and all who came to us!

"Still, I would like to see you. My Trixie liked you both. I remember she wanted me to make a drawing or lithograph of Abbey, for his wife.







LORENZO AND JESSICA.

LORENZO : " THE MOON SHINES BRIGHT. IN SUCH A NIGHT AS THIS,  
WHEN THE SWEET WIND DID GENTLY KISS THE TREES,  
AND THEY DID MAKE NO NOISE ; "

Eighteen inches by ten and three-quarter inches.

1888.

" THE MERCHANT OF VENICE," ACT V, SCENE I.

A drawing made for the " Comedies " but not hitherto published.

## MRS. WHISTLER'S DEATH

"So I must do it, for I just am left, I suppose, to carry out what she delighted in.

"One of these days I hope to get down to you. Meanwhile when you come to town let me know—that you may find me in the studio I had taken to please her.

"With my kindest regards,

"Always affectionately,

"St. Jude's Cottage, Heath End,  
"Hampstead."

"J. MCNEILL WHISTLER.

The lithograph portrait was never made.

The occupation of the next few months was almost exclusively the Grail paintings varied by a break here and there—once to Henley Regatta, once to Tadema's. There were visitors also to be attended to: Mr. Johnson from the *Ladies' Home Journal* to persuade Abbey to design a cover; while on June 9th, writing to his brother, Abbey says: "I had a man from Pittsburgh, the manager of the Carnegie Gallery, a day or two ago. They seem to be going to award medals there, although I fail to see the real value of a medal awarded to a painter by half a dozen ironfounders. They call buying an artist's picture 'awarding' him a prize. I have just awarded a prize of five shillings to a blacksmith who did a little job for me."

In July came a letter from John Hay: "I went to the Academy for a last look to-day, and saw that exquisite drawing of your 'Lorenzo and Jessica.' I rushed to the book to see if it was obtainable. There was no price affixed, and the attendant told me to 'communicate with the Hartiss.' Is it in your possession, and is it venal? I feel as if I could not be happy without it. . . . I have been dragged all over Europe by those two restless girls. We call them the Bicyclone. They took us (I mean Henry Adams and me) with the speed of a blizzard through Touraine and Holland and Northern Italy, without giving us a chance to take a long breath. We came back by way of Munich, where we saw and admired 'Fiammetta' again. We went to the Giusti Gardens in Verona in memory of you, and sat under the shade of your cypresses. The old Count walked by us with the young wife

## THE FUNERAL OF MILLAIS

and made a pretty picture."—Of the "Lorenzo and Jessica" drawing Hay could not become the owner, because it already belonged to Mrs. Abbey.

In August we find Abbey's only contribution to *Harper's* for 1896: two drawings to illustrate a play by his young friend Miss Laurence Alma Tadema, which, except an 'Old Song' in May, 1900, was his last contribution until February, 1902, when *The Deserted Village* began.

And now, in August, came a sudden and distressing break in the even tenor of the artist's life, for, owing to the illness of her mother, Mrs. Abbey was cabled for from New York and immediately sailed. Passages from Abbey's letters during her absence help us to visualise him. For the most part they touch upon the day's achievements in the studio, such recreations as cricket, cycling to Cirencester, Stow-on-the-Wold, and so forth, and dining at various neighbouring houses; but here is an extract which may justly be called historic. The lamented and tragic death of Millais, who had been President of the Royal Academy for so short a time, occurred on August 13th at the age of sixty-seven. A week later he was buried with full pomp in St. Paul's. Abbey was among the mourners, and from his letter to Mrs. Abbey, describing the ceremony, I now quote: "I went round early (to the R.A.) and found old Dobson there, who was an elder student at the R.A. when Millais came there as a little boy. Then one by one the company assembled. No one there but the members and the representatives of the 'Beaux Arts.' . . . Then we went down to the carriages which filled the court. We joined the procession as it came from Kensington. The streets crammed with people. I rode with Solomon, and it was a curious sensation having all those eyes curiously looking at you, every eye all along the route staring right at you. I was ready to shriek by the time we reached St. Paul's. The big west door was open, and we filed in behind the procession of people who had come from the house. There was a wide way up the nave barred off, and the trombone quartette was playing that Beethoven thing. The crowd of familiar faces along the barriers, and the music, and the big solemn place were too much for me altogether; but I stood it all right then, and we filed to the right and







A PAVANE.

OIL.

Eight feet seven inches by three feet four inches.

1906-1907.

## THE FUNERAL OF MILLAIS

left of the coffin, which I now saw for the first time, in the centre of the space under the dome. I was just behind the family, and the four pall-bearers on my side were Holman Hunt, Irving, Lord Wolseley, and Lord Carlisle.

"It was not until I looked up and saw the old palette and bunch of brushes and mahlstick tied with crape that I couldn't seem to stand it any more—and I can't now when I think of it—and the music and all—and all those representatives of whatever stands for greatness in the world gathered there to do all that was to be done to honour his memory. But for the very first time since you went away, dear, I felt that I wanted to paint; and as the music went on and on all the fidgettiness and despondency seemed to blow away, and I longed to be doing again—and to be doing great things that you would be proud of—and I shall too, I feel and know....

"Moody, the Academy beadle, stood before the coffin all through the service, holding up the big wreath of bay and laurel . . . .

"We came down the nave again and stood upon the steps while the carriages came up. It was a blaze of sunshine—and the crowd was still there, all eyes—like things one sees in a dream. John [Sargent] and Irving and I came down together."

Here, from a letter of September 2nd, is a typical passage regarding the progress of the Boston work, to which had now been added a commission for Mr. Whitelaw Reid's New York house, "A Pavane": "I have Miss Lee down and a rattling good model, who knows her business and sits well. She has been sitting for fifteen years, so she is not young, but very graceful and fine and big and *useful*. Has been sitting for a long time to Holman Hunt for a 'Lady of Shalott.' I lapped over two days with Purchas, so that they might sit together for the dance [the Pavane] which is coming on well, and for Joseph [of Arimathea] and the Grail angel in the one with Galahad holding up the old king. I did that head over—Galahad's—and it is *much* better, and, after days of failure, I finally contrived to get a pretty good head for Galahad in the boat. Also I've done the lepers spying out the deserted camp—all done but the camp, and three Marys at the Cross. I think you'll like this....

## MANY TASKS

"September 4th.—. . . I am sitting in the studio. The model has gone. She has been sitting for the white figure in the Reid picture. I have FINISHED another figure of the prophetess from her. She is a splendid model . . . and is remarkably intelligent, knows how to dress herself and how to rest bits without disturbing drapery, and puts things away. . . . Your letter came yesterday. It seems a long time between ships and such *little* letters! I imagine you there with them all, and the bright sunshine and the American smells, and all that. I wish I could do something great while you are away, but then I don't believe I should ever, unless you help. I can find bits and go on with things. . . .

"I've the Royal Exchange thing all sketched out. I made it an interior—the roof of Westminster Hall, and Richard under a daïs in the middle. I think it would be simple to do. I am getting on much better now—much better than I thought I should that first awful week. . . . I think perhaps it was the sensation at that funeral that started me, partly—not altogether, maybe—but I think one should get a big, stirring sensation once in a while. One gets so *blasé* that it is difficult, unless your feelings are very much touched indeed. 'Parsifal' was a great thing for me, I know, and I think we must go to one of those big musical festivals sometimes—or see the Pyramids or Athens or some great thing, at least once every year, because one can't just call up things from inside always. I want you to try to be in New York one day and to see the fellows, old Ganders, and White and McKim. . . . I see Olin Warner is dead. Poor chap, he was an unhappy nature, but a great artist."—"Ganders" was a nickname for St. Gaudens.

A long letter on September 6th to old Mr. Abbey, who was now in his seventy-first year, refers to Millais again. "I didn't know him so well as I did Leighton, but his hearty clap on the back and his 'I like your picture' are things one will miss. When I was elected to the R.A. he wrote, 'We were all delighted,' and I believe he was. . . . It seems curious that I should have been made an Associate of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts at almost the same time, and have had the Cross of the Legion of Honour also. They *write* me that I've been awarded this, but I haven't seen it yet. And there were people

THE RECONCILIATION OF THE MERCHANT TAYLORS' COMPANY WITH THE  
SKINNERS' COMPANY, IN THE TIME OF RICHARD III, AFTER A QUARREL AS  
TO PRECEDENCE.

PAINTED FOR THE ROYAL EXCHANGE, LONDON.

Seventeen feet by eleven feet.







## THE LEGION D'HONNEUR

who said that I'd buried myself in the country away from everybody! Well, I don't know how I'm to get through it all, but I suppose hard work, to which I am used, a regular life, and a life away from the distractions of the outside world will do as well for me as is possible...

"My work is getting more and more complicated. I am making studies for a large composition for the decoration of the Royal Exchange—a commission entrusted to me by the Masters and Wardens of the Merchant Taylors and Skinners Companies. It represents an incident in the history of the two companies during the reign of Richard III., and is 17 feet high. I am also making studies for the reredos of the American Church in Paris. I have not been given the commission yet, but am only working on the preliminary idea. The idea is a triptych with a Crucifixion in the middle. These, with the work for Boston, still far from accomplishment, and other things—a panel for Whitelaw Reid's house, and a lot of illustrations for the Amsterdam Bible—keep my nose pretty close, and I cannot seem to get through with it—*any* of it these days, as my tendency is to elaborate more and more; and with a more chastened, and, I hope, more austere taste, I find myself difficult to satisfy."

"Gertrude orders everything so carefully that I may be absolutely undisturbed in my work that, now that she is away from me, I realize, as I never did before, the mass of detail she keeps away from my sight and knowledge. It was a wonderful thing for me that we met, and she is one in a thousand—absolutely unselfish, so far as I am concerned, with her whole mind set upon the fact that my work must be carried out in as perfect a way as possible at whatever cost. Her mother is very ill, and she was hastily summoned home about three weeks ago. I don't know how I ever let her go, but I couldn't help it. I couldn't leave."

Abbey's panel for the Royal Exchange is the last on the right wall as one enters the central doors of that building. The subject is the reconciliation of the two Companies, after a period of enmity, caused by a quarrel as to precedence. The triptych for the American Church in Paris was, as we shall see, to give the artist some trouble, and was not finished for several years.

## THE AMSTERDAM BIBLE

The Amsterdam Bible requires a further note. The project had been first bruited to the artist in November, 1895, when the Secretary of the Société Artistique, "Ars et Amicitia," at Amsterdam, wrote to Abbey saying that a large illustrated Bible was in contemplation, to be contributed to by the best artists of the day, and edited by Professor Carel L. Dake, the Society's President; later some eighty subjects from the Old and New Testaments were divided between them, of which Abbey was invited to take five from the Books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, and *Kings*, and upon which he was working at intervals until the end of the year.

Abbey's certificate of Associateship of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts belongs to this year of many successes, 1896, and the letter accompanying the Cross of the Légion d'Honneur, which was conferred on July 25th, is dated November 19th, also 1896.

News of the death in Paris of his old friend and colleague at Harper's, Charles S. Reinhart, prompted this passage in a letter from Abbey to Mrs. Abbey on September 11th: "Poor old Reinhart's death has brought a flood of memories of those old days when he was the only man I knew who had been abroad and had seen great painters and schools. What a fortunate chap I thought him—and how I used to wonder at his lack of ambition. I was fond of him, in spite of his faults. But we don't usually care for people on account of their virtues—more often in spite of their faults." Within a month two more friends died—William Morris on October 3rd and George du Maurier on October 9th.

The letter of September 11th also said: "I have a surprise for you—I can't wait until you come, but this is it. I have let the studio [56 Bedford Gardens] for the remainder of my lease, for £120 a year. I'm a great man of business *I am!* I should very much like to go abroad this winter. I want to see things again. I should like to go to Munich and Vienna, and then down to Ravenna and Perugia and across to Florence. I have had such a lot of experience since I have been there that I'd like to see with my new eyes."

Mrs. Abbey came back to England on September 30th, and after a day or so in London, during which they saw *Cymbeline* at the Ly-

## A TRIPTYCH

ceum, and supped with Irving, she returned to her home and a sight of the surprises which Abbey's letters had more than once promised, chief among which was a triptych in her boudoir from Abbey's hand: "mediæval things," as she told Mrs. Mead, "unfinished, but so very, very beautiful—done all for me, never to be sold. Gold backgrounds in all. In the first, a girl in her garden kissing a letter, which a carrier pigeon had brought, another pigeon just coming with another letter. In the next picture is a man on his travels through a wide country, carrying a large basketful of carrier pigeons which he sends off at intervals, one pigeon far away in the horizon, another just loosed. In the third picture the man is dead, killed by thieves who are in the distance, but his soul, in the shape of a white dove, arises and flies straight away to his lady and stays with her for evermore—the colour of all most beautiful. . . .

"The great surprise in the studio was a picture for next year's Academy, at least half finished. . . . 'Who is Silvia, what is She?' There are six or seven figures in it coming down a staircase, Silvia in front, in the white silk dress with shot flame and gold Venetian sleeves. Then come her followers, one carrying her fan, another her little dog, and three others with musical instruments singing. At the bottom of the staircase two gold-fluted columns and a pedestal, on which are the family coats-of-arms—very decorative. The canvas is 4 feet square. The Boston things have got on quite a good deal, but there is an enormous amount to be done on them yet. The Bible things are well on—he did them nearly all a second time; he is so conscientious about his work! Then he has got on very well with the Reid picture, but the day I came he took out the whole background, which had been gilded with best gold and covered with an elaborate Italian Renaissance pattern. He was not satisfied with the pattern, and now it is regilded and a new pattern is to be put in directly. Then there are various other sketches—his picture called 'The Dark Ages,' just sketched in, some little sketches for the triptych in the Church in Paris, in case he does it, and a good large sketch for the Merchant Taylors and Skinners panel in the Royal Exchange....

## THE "HAMLET" BEGUN

"October 13th.—I have just come in from the studio—have been sitting to Ned for half an hour. He is working at the design for another picture—this time an important one, and until he sets it down on canvas he cannot get it out of his head, cannot go on with his other work. . . . The final canvas will be 5 feet by 8 feet. He seems very excited about it—'The Play Scene in Hamlet'—the players not visible—only the audience. Ophelia in the foreground, sitting on a cushion, Hamlet stretched out at full length, his head in Ophelia's lap. He is dressed in a black velvet tunic and purple tights—she in ivory-coloured [afterwards pink] garments, and has very yellow hair. Behind at the left, sit the King and Queen on an elaborate sort of throne, and behind Ophelia and Hamlet are Polonius, Soldiers, Courtiers and Horatio—the front of the picture very brilliant, the back very murky and mysterious. . . . I stopped just here to write to the Stores for Ned, to enquire whether they could procure three wolfskins with the heads on—heads not to be stuffed. He wants them for this 'Hamlet' picture. I had a new black velveteen garment made for Hamlet to-day, the sleeves faced with lilac satin, as also the bottom of the garment. He must have a new dress for Ophelia."

Upon this picture Abbey was to concentrate for the next two months until a relapse in the condition of Mrs. Mead in December made it necessary for her daughter again to cross the Atlantic, and this time Abbey went too. The crisis was safely passed when they arrived, but Mrs. Mead being still in a very weak state, Abbey decided to remain in New York, and he sent for his man to bring the "Hamlet" and the "Pavane" and the "Silvia," and all the necessary costumes that he might go on with his work there. Mr. Thomas Shields Clarke put his studio at Abbey's disposal, and it was there that the "Hamlet" progressed (with Mr. Clarke's little daughter as the child who stands beside the jester). There too, Abbey finished the "Pavane" for Mr. Whitelaw Reid, which was shown at the Spring Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. During this winter Mr. H. A. C. Taylor, for whom McKim, Mead, and White had recently built a fine house at No 3 East 71st Street, became the owner of "Fiammetta's Song," and at the same time commissioned two







THE PLAY SCENE IN "HAMLET."

OIL.

Eight feet by five feet.

1906-1907.

"HAMLET," ACT III, SCENE II.

## IN NEW YORK

further decorative paintings, the three to fit into certain wall spaces in his drawing-room, which had originally been intended for tapestry. (One of these, "A Poet," was finished in 1899, and the other, "A Measure," in 1904). The Hamlet, however, only proceeded towards completion, the head of Ophelia undergoing many changes—one day nearly finished, only to be ruthlessly dealt with on the next, and when, finally, Abbey sailed with his wife on March 17th it had been completely wiped out. Perhaps the trouble was partly due to an embarrassing wealth of models, for so many charming girls from the Art Schools flocked to Abbey's studio, and, in the hope of seeing him at work, offered themselves as sitters, that he was continually seeing new ideal characteristic features. And the same frustrating fate pursued him when he reached London, only a short while before it was time to send the picture to the Academy, for its wooden case being too big for the luggage van of the passenger train from Southampton, it had to be left behind to follow later, and was three days on the journey while Abbey and his model waited idle in Mr. Sargent's Fulham Road studio. Even after this there were difficulties and more repainting; but it eventually reached Burlington House. Mr. Sargent thought it better painted than the "Richard." Tadema and Orchardson were both enthusiastic; but the artist was not satisfied, and he not only worked upon it on Varnishing Day, but again after the exhibition.

The Varnishing Day verdict, however, relieved his mind. "He came back," Mrs. Abbey tells her mother, "years younger than when he went away in the morning. The men are delighted with his picture. It would have been a great mistake, they said, not to send it. The general verdict is that it is even much better than last year's, very noble and dignified, original in conception, and magnificent in colour. What a relief!"

This picture, now in the possession of Mrs. Abbey, had for its subject that moment in the play scene when Horatio is obeying Hamlet's instructions:

Give him heedful note

For I mine eyes will rivet to his face  
And after we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

## DEATH OF ABBEY'S FATHER

Abbey sent also to the Black-and-White Room of the Academy two drawings, his illustrations to Miss Alma Tadema's play "The Silent Voice."

Mrs. Abbey's letters now help again: "Morgan Hall, May 7th.—Ned's father is dead. We got the news yesterday. Ned is, of course, dreadfully upset about it. He has been a good son. There have been few better, but I wish for his sake that he could have seen his father once more. It was all so sudden—so unexpected.

"May 10th.—... Mr. Beatty, Director of the Carnegie Art Gallery, and his friend Mr. J. W. Black are here for the night, to ask Ned's advice about pictures for Pittsburgh [for the annual exhibition of American and Foreign Art about to be instituted]. . . .

"May 14th.—Ned has been fussing to-day over the etching 'Gloucester and Anne,' which has been very badly done. He has written to the people that he is not willing to sign it until it is improved." This etching was in Abbey's opinion altogether unsatisfactory, but, although against his will, he finally signed it.

"May 18th.—... Ned has not begun to work yet . . . cannot seem to settle down. . . .

"May 21st.—... Ned is not seriously at work yet, but yesterday he made sketches for two new pictures, which he means to do some time—one similar [in subject] to the pastel he did, called 'An Impromptu Dance' and the other the wrestling scene in *As You Like It*." Neither of these subjects was ever completed.

"May 27th.—... I am afraid that next week we must go to Paris. Ned cannot seem to settle down, feels that he must go somewhere to see things, and must see the Salon. . . . I am in the studio, writing at the desk. Ned is painting Silvia's dress. . . . I have had a most lovely white cloth bag and girdle trimmed with gold made for Silvia. . . .

"June 8th.—Paris, Hotel Metropolitan, 8 Rue Cambon.—... We went to Chartres yesterday to see the Cathedral, and Ned had all sorts of inspirations. He says that he sees now the old king seeing the Grail after Galahad has returned to the Castle and has asked the question. He means to make the Grail Castle people long and thin with draperies, like the old Byzantines, like the people on the

## CHARTRES CATHEDRAL

west door of the cathedral at Chartres. We bought photographs of them in order to study the details. We already have a dress which we once copied from these very people. . . . [Abbey carried out this scheme in the large painting which was afterwards discarded.] A fête was going on because it was Whit Monday, and hundreds of people brought candles, which were burning all day, and they produced such a beautiful effect that Ned decided to put them all around the cross in the last picture where Galahad sees the Grail."—The completed design, however, did not admit of this. "Yesterday we bought a most beautiful red silk Louis XVth dress for Ned [now in the London Museum]. He is to use it in a picture of 'Olivia' (*The Vicar of Wakefield's Olivia*). It is perfectly complete, with its trimmings and tassels. . . . We have been to all our usual haunts. . . . This morning we went to the Trocadero to see the casts of Cathedral doors and of other Gothic sculpture."

While still in Paris Abbey received the following letter from Professor John F. Weir, of the "School of the Fine Arts," Yale University: "It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Faculty of the Yale School of the Fine Arts have presented your name for the degree of M.A. to be conferred at the forthcoming University Commencement on June 30th. This will not only give pleasure to your many friends here, but it is a recognition of your distinguished services to Art, which the University wishes to recognise and publicly acknowledge. . . ." At the same time arrived the official letter from the Secretary of the Corporation of Yale University intimating their desire to confer this honorary degree, in case he could "be present to receive it." As this was the first honorary degree ever conferred upon any artist by Yale University, Abbey felt that he must make the effort to be there. Although the time was short he sailed with his wife on June 19th, went at once to the country home of Mrs. Abbey's parents at Greenwich, Connecticut, when a fortnight of perfect happiness followed. In New Haven old friends gathered about them, and their welcome was all that was delightful. They were the guests of Prof. and Mrs. Weir. The boat race and the Yale and Harvard base-ball match added zest to the little holiday. As a memento of this occasion, Abbey

## A YALE DEGREE

placed, later, in the "Yale School of the Fine Arts" his pen-and-ink drawing of "Rebecca and Rowena," which had been published that year, and he made a pencil drawing of Miss Weir for his hostess.

The following address was delivered by Professor George P. Fisher when the presentation of the degree was made:

"I have the honour to present to you for the degree of Master of Arts Mr. Edwin Austin Abbey, whose just title to his celebrity as an artist is equally acknowledged in this country and abroad. It is by works of peculiar merit that Mr. Abbey's position in the front ranks of American painters has been attained. His genius as an illustrator, principally of Shakespeare and English songs and tales, is inseparable from the power which enables him in imagination to produce life in past times, as one may see notably in his works relating to the eighteenth century. But this original power would be inadequate were it not allied with cultivation of a high order and patient researches. Born in Philadelphia, in 1852, and having been a pupil in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Mr. Abbey came to New York in February, 1871, to draw for *Harper's Weekly* [and Magazine]. For the last nineteen years he has resided chiefly in England. Of his work in the department of illustration familiar examples are the edition of Herrick's poems, of Goldsmith's play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and of all the Comedies of Shakespeare. The excellence of his productions in water colour is hardly less marked. Among his paintings in oil it is sufficient to recall the mural painting of surpassing interest, 'The Quest of the Holy Grail,' on the walls of the Boston Public Library. Medals or kindred tokens of honour have been bestowed upon Mr. Abbey at the Chicago Exposition and at the principal centres of art in Europe, as Munich, Paris, and Berlin. He is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in France, is an honorary member of the American Water Colour Society, an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects, and an Associate of the National Society 'des Beaux Arts' in France. Besides other honours of like character and equal significance, Mr. Abbey has lately been accorded the distinction of being made an Associate member of the Royal Academy of Arts in England."

## THE "LEAR" BEGINS

Abbey had brought with him the cartoons for the second and third Boccaccio decorations for Mr. Taylor's house—"A Poet" and "A Measure"—and these he set in their places, to note the effect.

From Mrs. Abbey's first letter after the return to Morgan Hall: "July 20th.—... Ned has a new Shakespeare picture in his head, and I have had to sit to him for several days. This time it is *King Lear*. Cordelia is bidding her sisters 'farewell' the King of France kissing her hand, and the old king and his followers departing from the scene. The canvas is to be 4 feet by 10 feet. Fisher has been stretching one of the Taylor canvases to-day. . . .

"August 3rd.—... Ned is working away at the Boston things, and now he is busy putting in 'Just Men made Perfect,' kings and bishops who came down with Joseph of Arimathea. They make a fine background for Galahad, when, in the last painting, he sees the Grail. [The Just Men afterwards gave place to Angels.] The two Taylor cartoons have been done over, and one is traced on the canvas. Ned has ordered a new stretcher for the new picture—the picture from *King Lear*.

"August 10th.—... Ned worked all day yesterday on drawings for the *Lear* picture. Later. . . . He has had a bad day—wiped out all he had done on Silvia.

"August 13th.—... Ned has been painting all day on Goneril. I see that he will not settle to the 'Grail' until he gets well on with this picture, or until he strikes a 'snag' . . ."

Meanwhile the "Hamlet" had returned from the Academy and Abbey was considering it with a fresh eye when a telegram arrived to say that Tadema was coming on a flying visit. Mrs. Abbey records Tadema's criticisms: "He would not let Ned touch the Ophelia's face—thinks it beautiful; wants him to finish certain things about Ophelia's dress, arm, etc., which, at one time, had been much more finished, also to do a little to the 'Hamlet' figure, but that was all. However, Ned is at this moment painting the whole of Ophelia's dress over again. We sat down to dinner, which, to save time, was carried into the studio in front of the 'Hamlet' and when we had half finished, he, having got rather excited over 'Silvia,' which he thought

## ALMA TADEMA

very beautiful—better painted than anything Ned had done—and also, having caught glimpses of the Taylor pictures and, being delighted with the ‘Lear,’ suddenly asked what was the latest minute for sending a telegram. I told him he must send it at once—that there would be just time to get it to the office—the ‘bus was already at the door—and so, at the eleventh hour, it was settled that he was to stay until the next evening. It is such a help and comfort to have anyone like Tadema come and talk things over. It clears the atmosphere—settles one’s mind about many things, even when one differs in opinion. . . . He told me that when Ned left Broadway, the ‘Ghost’ of the place changed—‘I mean,’ he added, ‘the Spirit [geist] of the place.’ You know that sometimes he makes funny mistakes in his English. . . .

“September 3rd.—Ned is painting on the *Hamlet* picture from a model named Antonelli—an Italian something like Colarossi. He has been working on Horatio and the man next to him. Yesterday he did Hamlet’s legs over. . . . We are starting to make the fool’s dress for the *Lear* picture. It was a long time before Ned could decide, but now we are to make it a sort of patchwork of a quantity of different pieces of old stuffs—some that we got in Venice—and I think it will be very good indeed. The model had on the owl’s dress this morning (made for the fool in the ‘Arthur’s Round Table’ painting).” In the end another dress was used.

On September 12th Mrs. Abbey again had to leave her husband, in order to go to her mother, having received on that day a cable, telling her to come at once, and this time she remained to the end, returning just before Christmas.

From Abbey’s letters to his wife a number of extracts follow: “After a couple of days in London, judging pictures for Pittsburgh, etc.,” he writes on September 21st, “I bought, in Wardour Street, some real amethysts—not good ones, of course—and a lot of old cut crystals, from which I have made a stunning necklace. It’s beautiful. I got at Liberty’s some odds and ends of stuffs—a curious old green silk shirt—with embroidery, and a long strip which I have had stitched to the bottom of a skirt, and have painted on the Regan figure. It looks first

## SIR JOHN GILBERT

rate—very real.... I found, too, a bit of genuine twelfth century stuff, nearly like that I had the stencil done from. .... It is the *very* thing, and the proportion of the figures to the piece is about the same as in the stencilled dress.... I dashed into the Tate Gallery.... The 'Ophelia' and 'Vale of Rest' of Millais are more and more beautiful and satisfactory....

"October 8th.—.... A fellow never knows what he can do until he has a good wife at his elbow.... I've been working very hard at 'Lear' and 'The Florentine Poet.' The latter is coming on well. I think my colour is improving. Perhaps I flatter myself.... I do work pretty hard, I think, but I only feel it when I scrub and paint and scrape and cannot get what I see in my mind. Then I get tired, and those two faces Goneril and Regan have been the mischief, but they are coming. The hands are good, I think, and I get the flesh better.

"Another great figure has gone... old Sir John Gilbert—who was only eighty after all. I fancied him older. A greater influence in the artistic line there never was—every engraver and draughtsman on wood collected his things that ever I knew, and it is amazing how many imitators he had. I only met him once, and he was pleased to be complimentary.... I should be curious to know how many drawings he made on wood. The *Chronicle* says 30,000 for the *Illustrated London News* alone; but I should think that an exaggeration—one thousand a year for thirty years!—but he certainly did an immense number." (It is interesting to note that one of the library editions of Shakespeare which Abbey used and marked—Staunton's—had Gilbert's drawings; but nothing could be less alike than these two illustrators. How many drawings Abbey himself made, no one has tried to compute; but he comes high among the prolific giants, and where actual strokes are concerned perhaps he comes first. There must literally be millions.)

"I discover new things nearly every day, and wish I had all the Boston stuff back again. I see the tone of it better. I should make it simpler from beginning to end. I think part of the reason the sky is so dull—it is very dull now being pitch dark—is that the trees are lighter—more light in them—and that very likely the whole tone of

## "FAUST AND MARGARET"

things is lighter than it is in midsummer, as the sky reflects what's under it, or the clouds do. I've no new ideas, I'm glad to say, except about the 'Trial of Queen Katharine.' I believe that will be a good picture when I get round to it. I wonder if she would do in black and white—a black and white dress, that is—and the background people all in rich things with gold chains and that.

"October 12th.—... Alfred[Parsons] came over last night, and we got on bikes and had a grand day out. ... Started at 11.30 and went to Bibury, where there was a meet, and on to Ablington and thence to Burford and on home through Lechlade. Splendid day, brisk air, and sun and autumn smells, and I feel as though all the cobwebs were blown out of me. It seems we did forty miles—that's what the cyclo-meter registered. . . .

"October 19th.—I keep first rate. I go to bed early and read a little and then sleep . . . and am clear-headed and have got everything in hand. . . . I got on well with 'Lear.' I had the red figure's head quite good yesterday, but this morning I must needs think I could improve it, and smeared it, as it wasn't quite dry, and had to wipe it out. Hard luck, for the head was the best painting I ever did. . . . I've got on well with the 'Poet,' and I suppose I shouldn't expect not to run against difficulties, but they are very wearing when I do—quite wearing....

"November 2nd.—A.[a young artist] was here Sunday. . . . Brought his picture for me to look at, and I sent him out to draw cows—draw 'em *hard*, not just sketch—and I made him stick at it too. I think I did him good. At any rate, I did myself good thinking I was helping him.

"November 9th.—... That idea I have had so long in the back of my alleged brains is taking shape—'Faust and Margaret.' Enclosed please find sketch thereof. She is coming up the steps of the church [in the painting she is going *down* the steps]—all in white—red church behind dark unimportant figures also coming up. . . . At bottom, in the street, Faust in orange and white and the devil in red, but the devil is transparent. You see him behind Faust. Behind *them* a crowd of people going about their business and among them a party of hawkers. Their hawk is running down some white pigeons, who flutter over Margaret's head—*see?* White things against dark and red things

## VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE

—dark hawk with his head done up in a bright hood. I'm inclined to think it is a good notion, and it is very carefully thought out in all its variations. I think the steps to the church should be stone and the church brick, but I can't remember 'St. Sebaldus,' whether it was brick or not, and I am trying to think of some appropriate Gothic carving to let into that buttress—one of the scenes of the Passion it should be. . . . I stump along at *Lear*. I wish I had made it a little higher, so that I could have had banners with oak leaves on them."

"November 13th.—It is three months [only two] since you left here and it seems six. I don't grudge you to your mother. . . . I have been driving at 'Lear' so that I might have it finished and be able to go to you. . . . Tell your mother the Wagner music is a great blessing these evenings. . . ."

On November 18th to 20th came a visit to the Asshetons at Cambridge to see "The Wasps" of Aristophanes. Writing on the 19th Abbey says: "I'm near dead, but have had a most interesting day [visiting the Colleges]. . . . Then an hour with the microscope, examining birds' eggs and various beginnings of things. Then Sir Joseph [Savory] wanted to go and look into the goings on at Newnham and Girton, and I thought I'd rather go to the Fitzwilliam, which I did—by myself. There was a football match I longed to see between Jesus and New (Oxford), but I was expected to go to the Fitzwilliam. . . . We had beautiful seats in the second row of the dress circle, which is *the* place in country theatres. It was really immensely funny and very well done. . . . I sat between Lady Savory and Miss Cardwell. . . . Dr. Butler, of Trinity, sat near us and Waldstein [now Sir Charles Walston]. . . . On Saturday I went to call on Waldstein, who has most beautiful rooms in King's College, full of beautiful things. I saw all the photos for his book on Argos. He has given up the school at Athens, and is devoting his energies to the excavations at Argos entirely. I had a most interesting call and fortunately knew all about what he was talking about. . . .

"November 23rd.—. . . I got home on Saturday evening; found old Gregory [E. J.] here. I'd asked him for the Sunday, but hardly expected to find him. We spent all Sunday over that boat in the 'Grail'

## E. J. GREGORY

subject, and he was an enormous help. I send you a few of his sketches to show the way he went about it. He built a model about 2 feet long of pasteboard, wood and wax, and took the greatest trouble and pains over it. . . . I never had a chap go into things so thoroughly. I wish I had his exquisite sense of line."—Gregory's letter of thanks for his visit contains this pleasant passage: "I had a real good time with you, old friend, and look back on it with the keenest pleasure. The combination of the utmost comfort of an English country house with an absolute wallow in 'shop' is quite unique in my experience, and was enjoyed by me with infinite zest. (He was a fellow of infinite zest)."

On November 28th Mrs. Mead died, and the news was sent to Abbey by cable. He at once replied: "I wish now I had gone with you, so as to be with you at this time, but it didn't seem worldly wise, and worldly wisdom is a mean thing. I thank Heaven I never had a great deal of it, but when I have exercised it, it has usually been at the wrong moment. . . . Something told me when you went away that there was only sorrow for you on the other side, and I told myself that I would hurry through the 'Lear' picture and go to you. . . . In the great sorrow of your life I *ought* to be with you, and it seems desperate that I'm not. . . .

"December 5th.—In times like this we should not be apart. I find it hard to settle to my work, but I try to put you in it. . . .

"December 7th. . . . You won't get this much before you sail. . . . I put you into all my work, and it is the better for it. . . ."

Mrs. Abbey reached home again just before Christmas. Among the surprises in store for her was a series of decorative designs forming a frieze all round her boudoir illustrating the romantic adventures of "The Squire of Low Degree." The series, unhappily, was never finished.







KING LEAR'S DAUGHTERS.

OIL.

EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY IN 1898, UNDER THE TITLE OF "KING LEAR."

Ten feet by four feet.

1907-1908.

"KING LEAR," ACT I, SCENE I.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### ROYAL ACADEMICIAN

1898 Aged 46

Full Academy Honours—"King Lear"—St. Gaudens—Charles Parsons—The Royal Academy and Nationality—American Members—Abbey's Diploma Picture

**A**BBEY, it will be remembered, had been made an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1896. Full membership does not necessarily follow, and when it does is usually after several years, but in Abbey's case the advance was so rapid as to constitute a record, his promotion to full Academy honours coming on July 1st, 1898, filling a vacancy caused by the death of Philip Calderon. Since his election as Associate he had exhibited three Shakespearian pictures, all of which had attracted much notice—the "Richard" in 1896; the "Play Scene in *Hamlet*" in 1897; and this year (1898) "King Lear's Daughters." To the Academy of 1898 he sent also "The Bridge," which is now in the public gallery at Cape Town, and the drawing of "Rebecca and Rowena" made for *Scribner's Magazine*.

Abbey's *King Lear* picture in the Academy for 1898 was sold before exhibition to the same collector who, in 1896, had bought the "Richard," the late George McCulloch. The moment chosen is that in which Cordelia, speaking "sweet and low," says to her sisters:

Ye jewels of our father, with washed eyes  
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are:  
And, like a sister, am most loth to call  
Your faults as they are named. Love well our father.  
To your professed bosoms I commit him.  
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,  
I would prefer him to a better place.  
So farewell to you both.

The picture was next exhibited in 1900 at the Guildhall; also at the Academy winter exhibition of the McCulloch Collection; in 1911 in

## ELECTED TO R.A.

the International Exhibition at Rome; and again at the Academy, after the painter's death, in 1911–1912. In 1913 it was, with the "Richard," sold at the McCulloch sale at Christie's. It subsequently was presented, by the late George A. Hearn, to the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

Just before the Academy exhibition in July, Abbey was invited by the Foreign Architectural Book Society to be their painter guest at the annual recreation meeting, which that year was at Wollaton Hall, built by John of Padua, where their hosts were Lord and Lady Middleton. This invitation he accepted, and then hastened to town for the election, spending the intervening hours partly at Christie's and partly at Lord's. The following letter to Mrs. Abbey tells the story of the election: "I wish you had been there to see the goings on. I dined at the Arts [Club] with Swan and Hunter and Crofts and Sargent, and we adjourned to the Academy shortly after. A very full meeting. We had coffee and liqueurs in the members' room—out of a fine old coffee pot—and then adjourned to Gallery II., where the long table with wax candles and green shades was placed along in front of my picture. The first ballot was scattering—nearly all of us had a vote or two—and then it got more exciting, and at the last ballot, which is with balls in a ballot box, I felt myself going up. Poynter counted Waterlow first, deliberately, as though he had all night before him, and then I was counted, and Waterlow was the first to congratulate me, and they all crowded round and shook hands. We went up to the Club and I made a speech and blew 'em off. I walked up with Waterlow and Swan, and really I don't believe there is a shred of jealousy in their natures."—Of the painters mentioned only one survives—Mr. Sargent.

Since Abbey was present at his election as Royal Academician he was in a position to be felicitated in person, as he had not been when he became an Associate, and there were, therefore, not so many written messages of congratulation as before. Two American congratulations I should like to quote. One came from the sculptor St. Gaudens, who, with Mrs. St. Gaudens, had been at Morgan Hall in the preceding month:

THE BRIDGE.

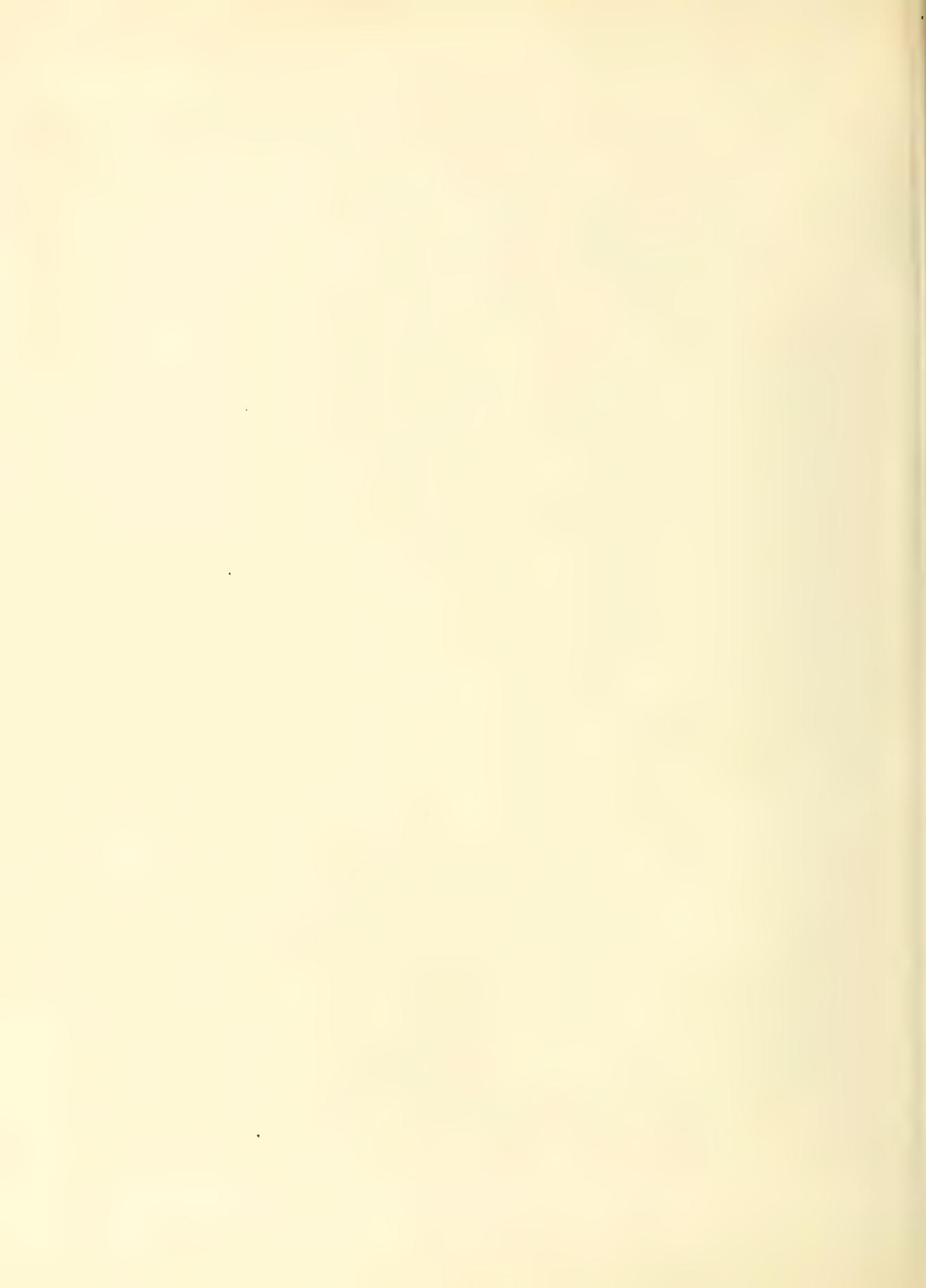
OIL.

Three feet four inches by two feet five inches.

1897-1898.







## AN ACADEMICIAN'S DUTIES

"ABBEY DEAR R.A.,

"Here's to the Royal Academy—they know a good thing when they see it.  
"Thine,

"July 6th, 1898."

"A. ST. GAUDENS.

The other came from Charles Parsons in his retirement: "I, as one of your oldest friends, who have watched your career from the early Franklin Square days, most sincerely congratulate you on this deserved honour. You are always with me, here in my country home, many of your early drawings are hanging on the walls of our cottage—drawings I purchased at the Fletcher Harper's sale, and other gifts from you . . . among them 'Pride on her brow,' 'Y<sup>e</sup> Bellman,' and the girl and little brother asleep, with the old parson droning away in the pulpit" ['The Day of Rest'].

Certain of Abbey's replies to congratulations of this year have been preserved. Thus, to John Hay he wrote: "I value your kind wishes very highly. The honour was not expected quite so soon, and I can't say that I feel altogether comfortable to have jumped over so many of my seniors, but the good opinion of one's fellow workers is a very heartening thing, and I hope I shall not disappoint them." He returned to this point in a long letter to Charles Parsons on July 18th: "It is good to see your once so familiar handwriting again, and I thank you very much for the keenly appreciated kind messages it conveys to me. It was a great surprise to me, and not an altogether comfortable one, being passed in over the heads of twenty men my seniors—for unless there is some very vital reason, the election to membership is taken in order of precedence. However, they are not a jealous lot—that ever I discovered—and I had no heartier congratulations than those from men who might reasonably have expected to be in my place. . . . The office brings many serious responsibilities from which Associates are free. The schools interest me very much, and I hope I shall be able to do some good there. . . . I have now, after next January, two years to serve on the Council and Hanging Committee. The latter occupies six whole weeks of energy, and no thanks.

"Now I'm hard at the Trial of Queen Katharine, in which I'm going to use a lot of stained glass. I hope the effect will be rich and

## E. J. POYNTER

serious. I think it a fine subject. I dare say it might be called literary. So soon as one begins to mean something it seems one is 'literary.' But one has to do what one must do. If my instincts present these pictures before my eyes, I can't turn my back on them. If I'm very much interested in them, as I am, it would be absurd to try to do something I'm not particularly interested in. People seem to look at them and be interested in them too, which some might say is a proof of this lack of righteous aim.

"Sargent is marvellously strong this year. One doesn't know where he will stop. There is a deeper note in some of his portraits than he has heretofore touched. He is the same generous, simple-minded fellow, with all his magnificent position. St. Gaudens has been with me for a few days . . . the sculptors here were delighted to see him. He is going to do the R. L. Stevenson monument for Edinburgh. Alfred [Parsons] painted a fine, big picture of rolling hills and wooded vales—and is hard at work on studies of gardens, in which he delights—not only himself but other people.

"I saw Cable in London. I'd never met him before, and was delighted with him. He has been Barrie's guest."—Mr. G. W. Cable, the novelist of New Orleans life, had been conquering literary London that spring.

The Royal Academy was proud of its new member and Abbey was proud of the Royal Academy. Indeed, he worked hard for it and was not less jealous of its honour than many an English-born Academician. The President during Abbey's day, the late Sir Edward Poynter, told me that he valued the counsel of this American colleague very highly, so shrewd and sound and wise, equally free from fads and any tendency to pull wires, did he find him.

Apropos of nationality, it is rather curious that of the very few Americans who have become Royal Academicians—not more than ten, even when Boughton (who was of English birth), and Copley (who was born in Boston when it belonged to England), and Washington Allston (who was only A.R.A.) are counted—four at least should have been historical painters and should have been singled out as subjects of Royal patronage. Thus, Benjamin West, P.R.A.

## AMERICAN R.A.'S

(1738–1820), who, like Copley, although American, was a Colonial, and, like Abbey, a Pennsylvanian, and painted pictures for his State, was appointed historical painter to George III; John Singleton Copley, R.A. (1737–1815), who, like Abbey, is represented in the Boston Public Library, was an historical painter who received commissions from George III; Charles Robert Leslie, R.A. (1794–1859), an American by parentage although born in London, was chosen to paint both “Queen Victoria receiving the Sacrament at her Coronation” and the “Christening of the Princess Royal,” in 1841; and Edwin Austin Abbey, R.A., painted in 1902, the official picture of the Coronation of Edward VII.

One of the rules of the Royal Academy is that no Academician elect shall receive his diploma until he has presented the institution with a “specimen of his abilities” to be preserved in the Diploma Gallery. The rule says further that this deed shall be performed within six months of election, “in failure of which his election shall become void, unless such an apology be made by him for the omission as may be deemed sufficient by the Committee.” It is, however, permitted to deposit a work of art as an earnest of the one specially to be executed. Abbey’s first idea was to paint St. Luke, who is fabled to have been a painter and is the tutelary genius of artists, and some progress was made with this picture; but on this occasion the evangelist was less helpful to his follower than he should have been, and the project was abandoned. In its stead Abbey sent, in November, 1899, “A Lute Player,” which may be seen in its place among the other diploma works; but although he took great pains he was never satisfied with it. His diploma was signed by Queen Victoria on December 4th, 1899.



## CHAPTER XXXII

### CRICKET

1898 and Later

**A**BBEY, as we have seen, was elected R.A. on July 1st, 1898. In a letter to Mr. Spielmann, July 13th, thanking him for his congratulations on that event, he wrote: "Next week the cricketing artists are to visit us and play four cricket matches in the neighbourhood, and I request your prayers for the triumph of Art." To an American friend he also wrote of the forthcoming matches, adding that cricket "takes the mind off the things of this world, such as paint and models"—a sentiment which was to develop into a creed, for it was during this week of energy in the field that Abbey both founded the Artists' Cricket Club and established the custom of an annual cricket festival of his own at Morgan Hall.

Cricket, as we know, had always had for him a fascination which in an American was extraordinary. Most of our cousins from across the Atlantic who are led, with reluctant feet, to Lord's make humorous remarks upon the English people's love of leisure even in their sports. They miss the stimulating presence of baseball "fans," and affect to swoon when they are told that a match lasts three days, and is often not finished then. Philadelphia, however, has always numbered a few of the righteous, and Abbey, coming from that city, brought to this country, along with all his love of baseball, a certain sympathetic receptivity for the alien game. To baseball he remained true: he kept its paraphernalia at Morgan Hall, and was always delighted to entertain American players there; but, like the energetic and very practical man that he was, instead of merely bemoaning the absence of the national pastime of his own race he threw himself with zest into that of the Old Country. For many years he had loved cricket, both practically and theoretically—during the summer months instinctively opening his paper, as all true devotees of the game must ever do, at yesterday's scores rather than at yesterday's

## A CAPTAIN'S TACT

debates; but until 1896 he played only very occasionally. Now, however, that he was a full R.A. and had won his way through, he was entitled to a little indulgence. Henceforward, although at an age when the first-class player (always excepting "W.G.") is too old, he would not merely put on his flannels whenever the chance came, but would make chances too.\*

The four matches of the first Fairford week were duly played in July, the artists being E. A. Abbey, R.A., W. Dacres Adams, R. T. Blomfield, the architect (now Sir Reginald and R.A.), Arnesby Brown, the landscape painter (now R.A.), E. H. H. Bruce, Henry J. Ford, famous as the illustrator of Andrew Lang's Blue, Red, Green, and other coloured Fairy Books, G. Gascoyne, G. H. Swinstead, A. Chevalier Tayler, and F. H. Townsend, the present Art Editor of *Punch*. Later the composition of the Morgan Hall teams changed, Dermod O'Brien, now President of the Royal Hibernian Academy, the late Walter Osborne, the Irish painter, the late Arthur ("Peter") Studd, and others, coming in.

The first match was against Mr. Audley Miller's Eleven, and was badly lost, the Artists making only 38 to 231: E. A. Abbey, stumped by Captain Clever off Harold Milward's bowling, 7—the second highest score of the side, and one of the highest that he ever made. Audley Miller, by the way, was captain of the Wiltshire Wanderers, and one of Abbey's letters to his wife tells of a dinner party at which they were present when Abbey, referring to some past match in which they had been on the same side, said that he hoped Mr. Miller had forgiven him for missing that catch. "With a charming smile across the table he said, 'But you made such a beautiful one immediately afterwards that I'd quite forgotten the miss,' and I sat there [Abbey continues] and took it, and never made any catch at all! It seemed to me rather neat."

The second match was against Mr. J. Henderson's Eleven, and was won by the Artists, the highest score in their first innings being

\* How pleased would he be to know that *Wisden's* alphabetical list of eminent cricketers, living and dead, from the earliest times, begins every year with "Abbey, Mr. E. A., R.A., President of the Artists' C.C."!

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF ART

G.H. Swinstead 29, and Arnesby Brown 22; and in their second Reginald Blomfield not out 50. E.A. Abbey 1, and not out 2. The third match, in which Abbey was only a spectator, was a return against Mr. Henderson's Eleven at Buscot Park, and this the Artists lost, the top scorers being G.H. Swinstead 32, and A.Chevalier Taylor 22; and the fourth and last was with Mr. W. Peacock's Eleven, which the Artists won, Henry Ford at last coming to his true form with 64, R.Ellison 31, and G.H. Swinstead 25. "E.A. Abbey, bowled B. Molloy, o." So ended the 1898 and first cricket week at Morgan Hall.

There have been unhappy, gloomy, and jealous painters—such notable examples as Barry and Haydon leap to the mind—but, taken as a whole, artists are a contented and friendly folk, asking not too much of life and pleased to see each other and pleased to praise each other. A certain simplicity, radiance, and spaciousness that distinguish them we may perhaps attribute in some degree to the circumstance that they are concerned chiefly with the visible world and with beauty, that most of them work only when it is light, having their evenings free for social intercourse; and that they work also in immense airy rooms, planned on the grand scale, whereas (but I hasten to say that I am instituting no comparisons) literary men, for example, are perplexed by introspection and often toil far into the night in minute or over-furnished apartments. Be the reasons what they may, the fact remains that artists are good company even for strangers, and among themselves appear to be the jolliest of men.

We have already had proofs in profusion that Abbey was the soul of camaraderie. We have seen him gay with the other young artists at Harpers'; at the Tile Club meetings and excursions; at Boughton's parties in Kensington; with the circle at Broadway. Everywhere he made friends and kept them. But he can never have been happier—nor could his fellow artists have been happier—than in the cricket field at Morgan Hall. Not a little of his joy in the game, and consequent high spirits, is to be recaptured from reminiscences of these Fairford weeks which have kindly been written for this book by certain of his fellow-players.

## G. H. SWINSTEAD

Mr. Swinstead, for example, who was a tower of strength in the field, for he was a tireless and (as I, myself, can testify) a very wily bowler, a sagacious captain and a desperately difficult man to get out, writes thus of his host: "Abbey's enthusiasm for cricket was an outstanding feature in his broad and genial outlook upon life. This enthusiasm was quite in harmony with the intense vitality of his art. Being a man full of life and energy himself, he realised the danger of an artist becoming narrow-minded, rusty, and self-absorbed, and saw in the recreative effect of air and exercise the necessary physical and mental help to creative power. It was cricket that gathered around him some of the men he most liked, and he realised its democracy too—how it brings people into social intercourse and places men on the same footing immediately. Many of us found lifelong friendships there and look back on those days as some of the happiest in our lives.

"In the spring of 1898 he came to me, all smiles and full of enthusiasm, to tell me he hoped to have an artists' cricket week down at his place at Fairford. 'Would you come and join in the fun?' said he. 'If I can fix the week perhaps you will come down a day or two before the others, and help me arrange things. Fisher [his handy man] and I have been preparing the pitch all the winter, and I think it will be pretty good by the time. I won't say much about the out-fielding, but it has its own picturesque footing.'"

I might interpolate the remark that Abbey had practical advice as to the formation of his cricket pitch from a neighbouring cricketer and friend, the late J. Arthur Gibbs, who played a little for Gloucestershire and wrote *A Cotswold Village*, that admirable book. All through the year this pitch was a source of anxiety, and Abbey never let a day go by, when he was at home, without visiting it, pulling up a plantain, pressing down a lump, or paying it some other intimate attention. There was steady rolling, too, not always without incident, for I find among the correspondence a letter of Abbey's to his brother-in-law, Mr. Frederick Mead, wherein a mishap is not only recorded but illustrated. "To add to our trouble, the weight on the roller slid back this morning and nearly hung the horse.... If

## AN EQUINE TRAGEDY

he hadn't been cut down he would have been hung. He broke one of the iron shafts. The lawn-mower he was to have toyed with hadn't come. He is a hired steed—and if he had died no doubt he would have turned out very valuable. The boy who lies on the ground is of no value."



"How," Mr. Swinstead continues, "Abbey ferreted out enough artists who could play cricket was then a mystery, but the side which turned out was quite a good one. Our ages ranged between thirty and fifty, but we played a solid week's cricket, putting up a good fight every time.

"Luncheon was held in the great 70 feet studio, where the twenty-two men [together with Mrs. Abbey, the umpires, scorers, and two or three

stray guests], sat down at one long table on all sorts of seats and benches, ranging in period from Henry IV. to Victoria. A more unusual and picturesque cricket-luncheon never was, and very little art-talk was indulged in, although five or six huge paintings of the 'Quest of the Holy Grail' stood silently round. 'Those big things take it out of me. I feel like a fly crawling about on them,' Abbey once said with a broad smile. The only brush that he touched during that week, however, was the one belonging to the whitewash pail, when he would mark the crease.

"The evenings were no less full of fun and incident than the day-time. Life was always breezy and interesting where Abbey was, and music, charades, mock-trials, and improvised recitatives on the cricket incidents of the day filled the time, until, smoking our last pipes, we wandered off to bed.

"Abbey was not a great batsman and, like all great men, was exceedingly modest. He always insisted on going in last, and as a consequence he was often 'not out'; but when he made a few runs his jolly smile showed how pleased he was. His fielding, catching and

## A CRICKET REFORMER

throwing were excellent. He often buzzed the ball in at a rate that surprised the wicket-keeper, and, always alert in his place in the field, he took the keenest interest in the progress of the game. Though he preferred not to captain the side, and asked me to do so, he would often make valuable suggestions as to change of bowling or placing in the field. His intense interest in the match was perhaps greater than anyone else's. One catch he made will never be forgotten by those who were playing in the match *Artists v. Musicians* on the Hampstead ground. I started the bowling against the best man on their side—a really fine player. Abbey had asked to go to the out-field, and was right down at deep long-leg, on squishy ground. My first delivery fortunately slipped out of my hand, and the result was a full toss on the leg-side, just the right height for a swinging hit, which the batsman laid on to. A very fine hit—but it was his only and parting shot. It rose high, swerved a bit, and fell straight for our president. Abbey moved a pace or two and, to our amazement, got it. It was a catch worthy of an all-England player.

“Abbey knew the game well, and it was always a pleasure to him to know what the best players were doing and what was going on in the cricket world. He had a very definite opinion that cricket-rules wanted altering, and that the game generally needed speeding up. In 1901 he wrote to me: ‘All cricketing rules seem to be made for the 200 odd men who play in particular matches. The 200,000 others who try to make a game in one day are not considered at all. Write to the *Times*—it is time we had something done for us.’”

One of Abbey's reforms was tried with success in a match during the “week” of 1901, and Mr. Swinstead wrote a letter to the editor of *Cricket* describing it. In order that everyone might have a chance of batting it was arranged that at the fall of the fifth wicket the other side should come in, terminating their innings also at the fall of the fifth wicket (or by declaration earlier). The first side then resumed its innings with the not-out man until the next five wickets had fallen, and so on. This plan was found to work very merrily. I am not aware that it has been adopted; but at Winchester they have, in their house matches, a somewhat similar scheme which divides the time avail-

## ARTHUR STUDD

able for play into two exact halves, each side, unless disposed of before, thus having the same batting period. Abbey's device seems to me better, for it practically ensures an innings to everyone and varies what is to many (but never to the real devotee) the monotony of fielding.

From the impressions of Abbey and the Fairford "weeks" which other of the Artists have written, I am forced reluctantly to omit a great deal, because—all covering the same ground—it is repetitive. But I must not omit all. The late Arthur Studd, affectionately known as "Peter," a member of a family whose name is inseparably associated with cricket triumphs, wrote: "The Artists was the only eleven I ever played with where, in spite of the keen desire to win, the sympathy of the field was entirely with the member who had the misfortune to miss a catch. That was no doubt because, being artists, we felt that it was particularly human to err. We all felt." added Mr. Studd, "proud of the presidency of Mrs. Abbey, who, whilst she took the greatest care of, and the keenest interest in, each one of her guests, impressed upon us that the whole affair was a picnic for the success of which we shared the responsibility. At all events, whatever was the cause, the spirit of youth and spontaneity took possession, though there was no dearth of grey hairs and most of us had seen our best cricketing days.

"I would like to say," Mr. Studd concluded, "how much I was struck by the modesty, the courtesy, and the good heart of our host — how he was always interested in the opinions and views of even the youngest and most undeveloped. He had the true feeling of an artist for his 'confrères,' treating each with the respect due to an independent worker in a vast field of research."

The Hon. Walter James, who became one of Abbey's closest friends, writes thus: "It was always a matter for astonishment how the Abbeys could suddenly deal with an incursion of some ten men and make them all perfectly comfortable and radiantly happy. It was the great occasion of the year for a good many of us, I know, but I am not sure that the Abbeys themselves didn't look forward to it as much as any of us, and I know that they were very sorry when the

## WALTER JAMES

stress of Abbey's work made it necessary to discontinue the festival. There will certainly never be anything quite like it again. Abbey was really and genuinely fond of cricket and thought quite a lot about it at seasons when many enthusiastic cricketers have quite put it out of their minds. I have been out with him on his cricket ground in February or March, throwing cricket balls about in the mud; and the way in which a cricket ball can sting in summer is a mere nothing to what it can do when it is wet and slimy in the winter! However hard Abbey was working (and he was always working very hard in the later days at Fairford), there were always in the studio, in a more or less prominent position, a cricket bag and some of the implements of the game, and also some baseball tackle.

"It is very difficult to give an accurate impression of the quite distinctive atmosphere which always surrounded these occasions, but which was entirely due to the personality of our host and hostess. After dinner in the evenings we used to be very festive, and act charades, sing improvised oratorios, and so on. Mrs. Abbey was the only lady except on one or two occasions; the only privileged persons of the other sex were, I think, my wife and Lord St. Aldwyn's daughters."

To these memories I append sentences taken here and there from letters written by the cricketers either to their captain or to their hostess. Thus Mr. Dermot O'Brien, who had strained his leg during one of the games: "Just now I am waiting for the doctor to come and put my leg in a splint and plaster so that I snatch the occasion to write. Should I have to have my leg taken off at the knee, eventually, I dedicate it to Fairford and think that the price would not be too great for what I have had at your and your husband's hands."

From Arthur Studd to Mrs. Abbey after the 1901 week: "It was hardly possible to believe so much kindness and good fellowship existed in the world before we met with it under your hospitable roof, and we each of us came away with a great pleasure added to our lives and a new revelation of artistic possibilities (which the losing of several matches only emphasises)."

From Mr. L. C. Nightingale ("The Bird"), of Dulwich College: "These cricket weeks which I have spent at your house have given

## WALTER OSBORNE

me such pleasure that they form landmarks in my life—always to be recalled with delight.”

In 1900 the late Walter Osborne who, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, bowled well enough to have made a living by cricket, had he wished, once performed the hat trick, and duly receiving his hat (one of the studio properties) thus acknowledged it: “The hat you presented me with excites wonder and admiration, and with a ticket in the band of it, bearing the words ‘Hat trick, Fairford, July, 1900,’ is a real adornment to my studio.” In another letter, also to Mrs. Abbey, Osborne said: “Give my love to Mr. Abbey and tell him I shall bring those unfailing streaks of thirst and hunger. I wish the cricket streak were half as reliable. Whilst I write it pours with rain. So far we have been denied any real summer here, and, in the words of Corot, ‘Nature is hopelessly green, and very badly lighted.’” Again, from the same artist, referring to a match with Sir James Barrie’s Eleven: “Begorrah! I’m keen to help you in the destruction of the ‘Leetle Meenister’ and his team, and I hope to be there, wherever it is, on May 19th. I fear the breakback is in abeyance, as I haven’t touched a bat or ball since last May.”

Sir James Barrie, a cricket enthusiast not less keen than Abbey, and the ruling spirit of a club of his own called the “Allahhakbaris” (meaning “God help them!”) which had regular contests with the Artists, writes to me thus: “Surely you are to have a chapter about Abbey as a cricketer? No one not native born to it was ever quite so enamoured of the game. It is sad that we have no painting by him of a village green on a sunny afternoon, the prettiest sight in England. You could head the chapter ‘He falls in love.’

“In autumn and winter Abbey painted, but in spring he oiled his bat and in May he put on his pads. Then the fun began. He was tremendously professional and looked with remote reproof at you if you did not call the ball the sphere or the leather. Tossing for first innings was a solemn ecstasy to him. As the rival captain, it was my privilege to walk with him to the pitch and examine the state of the wicket. We shook our heads over it, or nodded, or said it was a bowler’s day and that Jenkins would find a spot presently; and you

## J. M. BARRIE

would have sworn that Abbey knew what we were talking about. He would have given you his all if you had called him Jessop.

"He was not a great bat; he cannot have been a great bat, for it seems to me that I have bowled him. Of this, however, I am uncertain, as a few weeks after one of our encounters each was of the opinion that he had bowled the other. I think the reason we were allowed to bowl at all was that we were the captains and no one could take us off. Our styles were dissimilar. I bowled so slowly that Abbey, having gone through the craziest evolutions with the bat (see diagrams 6, 7, 8, and 9) grew tired of waiting and lashed out while the sphere was still but halfway upon its travels. In this way I think I sometimes got him, the sphere finally resting wearily against the wickets. His bowling was of a very different character. He came rushing like a whirlwind to the crease, combining in one glorious moment all the methods of all the favourites whom he studied in text-books, and it might be that my stumps were hurled into the slips. But he had his off-days, like Hirst and Barnes, and the others, and it was always possible that, instead of mowing down the sticks, he would hit point in the stomach. The short field was always very alert when Abbey went on to bowl.

"It was in fielding that he was truly great; he had vast courage as well as enthusiasm, and would have tried to stop a thunderbolt to save the third run. Abbey in the field! It is long ago now, but I see myself still about to receive my first ball of the season from his eleven of Artists (Nightingale, Studd, James, Ford, Arnesby Brown, on my last legs I salute you!) All the eleven except one want me to make a single before I return to the pavilion, but that one, initials E. A. A., has for his passion the rigour of the game. He would rather give me a picture than a second ball. He is also fiendishly avid to be himself the instrument of my undoing, though he is not bowling. I seem to face the bowler calmly (O Swinstead, O Mores!) like one who feels that as the years roll on the coming mishaps will assume a smaller place on the horizon; but it is of Abbey I am thinking and with trepidation. He is standing at mid-off—not really standing, for he is so fond of cricket that in the field he makes himself as like the ball as

## J. M. BARRIE

possible. His muscles are wriggling like eels, he is so horribly alive. I know he is creeping nearer me, licking his lips as he comes. He is not a ball, he is a human catapult, and, though the proposed target is the wickets, I know that in the last second he will change his mind and hurl the leather, if he gets hold of it, at my inoffensive person.

"The only fault he found in cricket was that it was not sufficiently dangerous. He tried to remedy this. As soon as you struck the ball you remembered Abbey and flung yourself on your face.

"Great were the evenings that followed, though you might be in sticking plaster. He was the soul and life of them. All my memories of him are of a great-hearted, lovable man, a strong nail to keep any brotherhood together. We all take our hats off to him as an artist; he was what Stevenson would have called 'one of the swells'; but even now if I meet his shade suddenly at a street corner, it is the cricketer I think of first, and I involuntarily duck my head."

To return to Mr. Swinstead's account. "No more delightful evening," he says, "could be imagined than the Artists' Cricket Club annual dinner in London. Abbey always looked forward to this gathering, and he would never miss it if he could help, and presided on almost every occasion. As a chairman he was unique. His charming allusions to cricket incidents of the last season, and to the artists present, many of whom he knew intimately, made these evenings memorable, and the time always passed in the most cheery way. Abbey endeared himself to many, both here and in America, but by none was he more beloved than by those whose good fortune it was to be associated with him in the Artists' Cricket Club."

Concerning one of these dinners, a letter from Abbey to Mr. Swinstead in 1902 defines his attitude to the game very clearly: "It is awfully good of you all to wish to make the next dinner a complimentary one to me—but I hope you will not think (as I am sure you will not) that I am unappreciative of the honour you would do me if I ask you to abandon the notion. I am no cricketer, and it amuses me immensely to play that I am—and to be young with you all. I should feel that the end of it all had come if I were to be put on a pedestal and made much of—when I only wish to be one of 'the lot.' I know

## THE ARTISTS' CRICKET CLUB

I'm not, but I don't wish the fool's paradise I at present inhabit to be rudely jostled. We should have a cheery evening as of yore—don't let's have any changes."

The constitution of the Artists' Cricket Club, which was not formally established until April, 1899, and was distinct from the Fairford Cricket-Week Companionship, was as follows: E. A. Abbey, R.A., President; H. H. La Thangue, A.R.A., Vice-President; A. Chevalier Tayler, Hon. Treasurer; G. Hillyard Swinstead, Hon. Secretary; the committee consisting of Harry Bates, A.R.A., Reginald Blomfield, Arnesby Brown, Henry J. Ford, George Gascoyne, Herbert Marshall, and Philip Norman. Once the idea was approved Abbey threw himself into the project with all his thoroughness and zest, and set about designing the cap and blazer, which were to be of red, white, and black—red signifying colour as colour, and black and white as the other medium for artists, Abbey having a theory that the works of the great masters were based upon a scheme involving that trinity. Mr. Swinstead seems to have submitted his own blazer as a model, for I find Abbey writing to him on August 19th, 1898: "The coat is great—I'll send for one at once... I found some biscuits in the pocket which I have carefully preserved for you. I supposed at first they were some rare kind you were sending; but no, we have some of that kind. I think diagonal stripes for the hat ribbon best.

"Monday.—I have lain awake several nights thinking over this stripe business. On the whole, don't you think a stripe going round looks more regular? I think so. We don't want to be 'bizarre'."

That autumn Abbey went to Rome, but even there he could think about the Club and the next season, as well as trifle a little with the American national game. Writing to Mr. Swinstead on October 29th, he said: "As to the meetings, I shall be back early in December, and shall try to do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased the Artists' Cricket Club to call me. . . . I played in one match for Miller—a painstaking 6 not out—a combination of patient and watchful defence with, at times, brilliant and timely hitting all round the shop. Miller wants to get his card ready early—say about Christ-

## BASE-BALL IN ROME

mas. I thought we'd do a two-days match with him if all goes well. The one-day matches are very unsatisfactory.

"I am getting in a little base-ball game here with the students at one of the Jesuit Colleges—they're obliged to wear cassocks. They play well—too well for me."

Writing again to Mr. Swinstead from Rome on November 17th, he said: "You should see me here play baseball in the Borghese Gardens—with American students, priests in cassocks and art students. I look real well, but the natives think we're crazy. A young chap in a cassock, a rubber breast protector, and a wire mask is a great sight. They're not allowed to take their cassocks off."

I bring this chapter to an end by stating that although Abbey died as long ago as 1911, the Artists' Cricket Club, which still flourishes, has had no other President. Nor will it ever have another, for after his death the members met and decided to consecrate that position to him. In a very touching letter to Mrs. Abbey, from Mr. Ford, this decision was communicated. I quote a little from it. The date is March 14th, 1913: "Words do so little good, but I am sure that your kind and sympathetic heart may possibly find some little degree of comfort in hearing from each of us how much we loved him, and we join our lesser sorrow to your great one if we may. And we shall think lovingly always of that great, kind spirit of his that was the making of our happiness. How he loved to make everyone cheerful and happy and comfortable in mind and body around him!"

"I feel sure you will be interested to hear a little about the meeting of the Artists' Cricket Club last night. Though Walter [James] told me that he hoped to see you and tell you all about it, still I should like to write a line myself. Walter presided at the dinner and meeting afterwards. He made a very beautiful and very simple speech about dear Abbey, and asked us to drink to his memory standing up in silence. When this was done Swinstead spoke at some length, dwelling on the delightful beginnings of the Club and all those happy times at Fairford with you and him. He pointed out very well and feelingly how much we owed to Abbey, that he had founded the club and was the moving spirit of it, and how we had all felt so sadly his

## A PERPETUAL PRESIDENT

loss since he died, and that it seemed impossible to replace such a man as he. So he proposed that we the Artists should consider him to be our Perpetual President, and as such his name should be inscribed at the head of our lists. The actual words of Swinstead's motion were as follows: 'In order to honour the memory of Edwin Austin Abbey, R.A., the founder of the club, we retain his name as Perpetual President.' This was carried unanimously, and in order to have extra working officials to keep the club going strong, we elected three additional Vice-Presidents, Swinstead, Blomfield and Walter James, who will all take an active interest in the prosperity of the Club."



Act II

S. N. M.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### A LONDON HOME

1898 (continued)–1899 Aged 46–47

Munich—Verona—Rome—The American Academy in Rome—Awards from Abroad—Costumes for *Richard II.*—John M. Swan, R.A.—The American Tariff—“Chelsea Lodge”—Mells and Bods—The Cricket Week of 1899—Dinner to Alma Tadema—Royal Academy Silver—John Hay

ON October 11th the Abbeys left Fairford for Italy, *via* Munich, stopping in London for two days in order to see Irving and attend to matters concerning the projected production of *Richard II.*, of which more will be said in due course. Munich, however, was a disappointment, for the Bavarian National Museum, where Abbey had hoped to study the Gothic collections, the armour and the weapons, in which it is particularly rich, was closed, and the treasures were gradually being moved to a new building. In the hope of some kind of preferential treatment, Abbey called on Lenbach, whom he had met at Leighton’s, and through the interpretative services of another caller (who chanced to be Siegfried Wagner) put his case, with the result that he was allowed the run of the partly denuded galleries, where fortunately the armour and weapons still remained intact, and he made a number of useful sketches. It was not, however, until 1906 that he was able again to study the collections as a whole.

From Munich they passed on to Verona, where Abbey made studies of the military Ponte Molle—the Ponte del Castel Vecchio—both eastern and western sides, engaging a room with a little balcony opposite the western side in order to be undisturbed by inquisitive foot-passengers, while the eastern side was done from the courtyard of a neighbouring palace. He also made studies in the Giusti Gardens, some of which were of use when he repainted his picture “A Poet” on his return to England.

Arrived in Rome they took rooms under Elihu Vedder at No. 68 via di Capo le Casa, and began to frequent the Villa Papa Giulio for architectural studies.

## AN ITALIAN JOURNEY

Abbey also visited the scholarship students at the American Academy and gave them hints in arranging compositions. So much for work. As to play, extracts already quoted from letters to Mr. Swinstead (in the previous chapter) have shown us Abbey at baseball with the American priests in the Borghese Gardens. There were also excursions to the environs—to Frascati and to Tivoli, where in the Villa d'Este he found the staircase which he used in Mr. Taylor's picture "A Measure."

The death of Mrs. Abbey's father, which had just occurred at a ripe age, is referred to in the following letter from Abbey to his brother-in-law, Mr. Frederick Mead, from Rome, on November 16th: "I remember with great pleasure your father's kindly interest in my work and in my affairs generally, and I wish he could have lived to pay us a visit at Fairford. Your loss has been great, but your father and mother were spared to you for longer than is the lot of most men; but it is a loss that makes us feel older, as I can say from experience. Give my love to your wife and tell her she has married a pretty good chap, who if he only makes as good a husband as he does a brother-in-law will leave little to be desired." Referring to his hope that Mr. Mead would bring his wife to visit them and perhaps sojourn for a while in Italy, Abbey says: "We have several times seen places that will be available for a few months—villas and palaces, with fleas complete—but for a real rest England is the spot. We have just returned from a few days at Tivoli, where we slept in a brick-paved apartment last scrubbed in the time of the Cæsars—incomplete in all respects from the point of view of modern requirements save that they supplied us with a white comb (which had an elephant engraved upon it). This we looked at with respect, but neglected to avail ourselves of."

After leaving Rome a few days were spent in Perugia, where the Abbey had the delightful rooms in the Grand Hotel occupied every year by Leighton, when he went there to write his annual address.

On December 10th Abbey wrote from there to Mr. Spielmann: "This is a tremendously suggestive place, but I am, so to speak, merely breathing the air and thinking over what might happen if I

## THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ROME

hadn't so many other irons in the fire at the moment. An excellent inn in all respects, as you doubtless know well—with air to put life into a mummy. I don't wonder Leighton loved to come here. It does me good to hear the servants speak of him. . . . You should be very interested in the American School at Rome. It is a lively and a likely kid, and has now five architects, one painter and one sculptor under its wing, with rather uncomfortable though swell quarters in the Villa Aurora. They work on the lines of the Villa Medici, but, of course, have not the background of that splendid establishment. When shall we have a similar one to send our medallists of the R.A. to?"—The last sentence shows that all those years ago Abbey already had in mind a British School in Rome. Of this school, which now is beginning to flourish, and the association of Abbey with it, more will be said later. Abbey maintained his interest in the American Academy to the end.

In the work of this year (1898) the "Holy Grail" panels, of course, came first. Having finished the "King Lear" Abbey began "The Trial of Queen Katharine" and continued upon Mr. Taylor's commission. On being exhibited at the Vienna Jubilee Exposition the "Hamlet" won for its painter the large gold medal; and the Gold Medal of Honour from the Pennsylvania Academy came this year also. Mr. Edward Homer Coates, the President of the Academy, announcing this, wrote: "Permit me to offer our sincere congratulations upon an award to one whose career has done so much honour to the Academy Schools, to Philadelphia and to the whole Country." Another American compliment was the formation in Rochester, N.Y., of the "Edwin Austin Abbey Club of Painting and Design," the members of which were chiefly lawyers with leanings to art.

Another of Abbey's tasks in 1898 was to design, at the request of Irving, the dresses and scenes for *Richard II.* which he proposed to revive at the Lyceum. Here Abbey was in his element, and he flung himself into the work with tremendous spirit. His thoroughness was never better exemplified, for he designed dresses for everyone who could possibly be on the stage, from king to cobbler. Writing to John Hay after the actor had perforce given up the scheme, he says:

## COSTUMES FOR *RICHARD II*

"I have been disappointed very much recently by poor Irving's decision to abandon his idea of doing *Richard II*. I had been having lots of fun with it, and had had his scene-painters down here in relays, who had undertaken to reproduce certain gardens as depicted in that beautiful MS. of the *Romance of the Rose* in the British Museum and to construct a highly mediæval and heraldic background for the unfortunate gentleman. It was all to be absolutely unreal and a long, long time ago. I had lots of old patterns with queer birds and beasts 'affronté,' and the heraldic device of each character was to be woven and embroidered. Ships built that never could have sailed on any sea, and so on and so on—and it is too bad that it isn't to come off. I am wondering what he will do with all the stuff—for lots of it was finished." The whole collection of these drawings, with pieces of the actual stuffs pinned to them and every kind of careful instruction as to the lacing of shoes and so forth, is now in Mrs. Abbey's possession. Some of the dresses are magnificent; all are striking; and the total effect, done in Irving's handsome, lavish way, would have been unforgettable.

Meanwhile Tadema was also putting his pencil and knowledge at the disposal of the stage, having accepted Beerbohm Tree's invitation to dress *Julius Cæsar*. Writing on December 1st he confesses to a weariness similar to that which Abbey had felt while *La Tosca* was preparing: "Unfortunately we will be unable to profit by your kindness, for the rehearsals of *Julius Cæsar* have begun and will last till the 22nd, and the 23rd or 24th we will be off to sweeter climes.... I wish *Julius Cæsar* had never been born. What a relief it would have been to me!" In another letter written about this time I find Tadema expressing himself thus sweepingly with regard to the art of music and those who practise it: "Bispham was here also and joined in the fun. He is a fine singer and first-class musician. You know him? I like him; he lives only for his art, bless him! I hate people who do something else."

In December the *Century Magazine* again became desirous that Abbey's work should appear in its pages, and its editor, R.W. Gilder, writes asking him to contribute "some pictorial illustrations of

### J. M. SWAN

Cromwell—scenes in his life to be selected by you,” but other work engrossed him to the exclusion of this and many other things he would have liked to do.

The last letter of 1898 is from the animal painter John M. Swan. “Old Ford [Onslow],” the letter says, “ran in yesterday. We were speaking of you, but I still dispute your being the most hard-worked man in England:

The prettiest sight that e'er was seen  
Was Lincoln men in Morgan Green.

I have done no work except retouching waxes and the small canvas of a puma, or the ‘Mounting Lion’: mine is going up a tree. May you continue to crackle all over with bank-notes. . . .”

The year 1899 opens for us with a letter from Abbey to John Hay on January 1st, written rather more to Hay the Secretary of State than to Hay the *convive*. For Abbey had a grievance—the heavyduty on imported works of art in America, especially those of living men, and he wanted it redressed. “What am I,” he asks, “that I should raise my little peep?” And he replies, “One of a small class of expatriated American citizens who is taxed by his grateful country for sending his ‘things’ home, instead of disposing of them here. I have sometimes wondered how it can be legal to discriminate against artists in this way. The members of other learned professions are let off—and I wonder whether the amount we are taxed, however troublesome and vexatious it is to us, really benefits those men very greatly who prompted Congress to impose a duty upon our work. If ever there was a learned profession ours is one, and one it takes a long time to learn, too—I doubt if anyone ever got it ‘good and learned’—and, as a rule, the reason we stay here is because we are students, and not, as I have heard, because it is cheap (which I have yet to discover). In the instructions to the Consul in Rome, the U.S. Treasurer spoke of us as having our ‘places of business’ abroad. I wonder if he knew what he meant by that. I suppose he would call the Vatican, or the South Kensington Museum, a ‘place of business.’”

MORGAN HALL,  
FAIRFORD,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

January 1, 1879.

Clydeau Bay. A Happy New Year.  
to you all from us both - and very  
many of them - The one just ended  
has been a hair-raiser for visitors and  
unlooked for sensations - I write  
on the chance that you may have  
an odd moment - On. think of  
a Levee of Steel immersed in  
weighty affairs. unceasing toils  
and overhanging responsibilities - and  
managing it's map of the world  
generally - in the present instance  
upon a new and benevolent plan  
the details of which involve sleepless  
nights and days of weariness - and  
in his odd moments, torturing in-  
factory politicians and baffling news  
paper reporters - However - here's that.

To begin with - Mrs. Stango albu  
has not turned up - and I am  
worried for her. It may have  
been asthma. I have finally  
got to the base of the mountain  
of second class hotel month - the  
accumulation of nine weeks - and  
have undone all the books - much  
of them, more of that interminable  
edition of Meredith - the Mrs. May  
book was not there. I have  
been in Italy for a couple of  
months - and it has taken some  
time to read all the various  
in the American Magazine - and  
the criticism in the Stephen Weekly  
- Charlton Lewis and Schuyler I suff  
- commenting upon the wickedness of  
stretching out our national arms  
and & go - and it is difficult to  
for me to see why these persons  
omit the fact - as long as we have

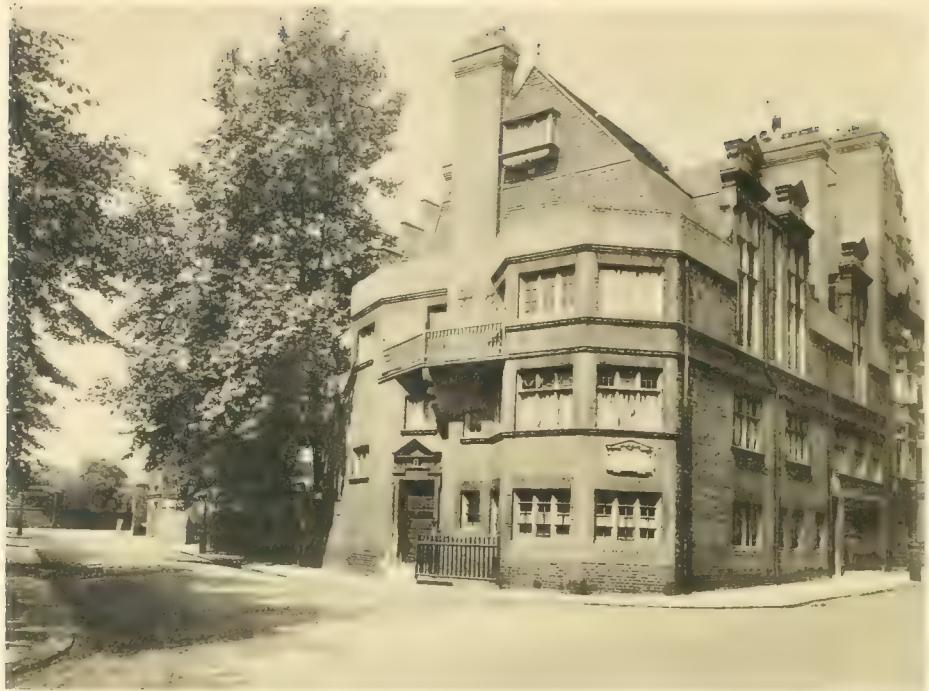
a real need for creating  
a civil service of educated  
men - something like the India-  
Civil Service on a small scale - but  
to maintain the need of a foreign  
service on another different line  
than that we have here to you less  
certainty about it. I see that now  
one has been appointed to such  
a post in your chain - It is better  
sometimes to let the change be  
a little gradual - But we understand  
also it is going to be - I daresay  
June 1st of all this - and  
what am I that I should raise  
any little peep? One of a small  
class of expatriated American citizens  
who is taxed by his grateful country  
for sending his things home - instead  
of discarding them here - I have  
sometimes wondered how it can be  
legal to discriminate against artists  
in this way - The members of other  
learned professions are left off

- and I wonder whether the amount we are taxed, however troublesome and vexatious it is to us - really benefits those men very greatly who prompted Congress to impose a duty upon our work -

If ever there was a learned profession - ours is one - and on it takes a long time to learn, two - I doubt if anyone ever got it "good and learned" - and as a rule the reason we stay here is because we are students - and not as I have heard - because it is cheap - (which I have yet to discern)

In the instructions to the Consul at Rome - the U.S. Consul, speaks often to having our "places of business" abroad - I wonder if he knew what he meant by that. I suppose he would call the Vatican - or St. Peter's Museum a "place of business" - most of us are







CHELSEA LODGE, 42 TITE STREET, LONDON.

1. EAST FRONT, SHOWING THREE STUDIO WINDOWS; AND THE SOUTH FRONT, SHOWING THE TABLET PLACED THERE BY HIS FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS.
2. THE WEST FRONT, SHOWING TWO STUDIO WINDOWS, AND COURTYARD.

## CHELSEA LODGE

"Most of us are proud to be Americans. I am . . . and in spite of all the exasperating snubs we are made to suffer from ignorant officials there are mighty few of us, I am glad to say—and you know—who would exchange his birthright for any number of official distinctions, no matter how much easier things would thereby be made for those of us who live here; and I do not think we should be fined for this sentiment, as though we were a disgrace to our country, either. As you know, many things would be made easier for us, as students—or even members of society—if we were subjects of foreign sovereigns. All sort of privileges, for instance, are accorded the *pensionnaires* of the foreign academies at Rome which our boys of the American School find very difficult of attainment—and simply because they have no official position. . . . I'm afraid that most of the knowledge of art students at the disposal of many of our Consuls and even Ministers is gathered from a perusal of *Trilby*." Later, as we shall see, Abbey returned to this crusade.

Hitherto, the Abbeys on their visits to London had stayed usually in lodgings, while Abbey had now and then borrowed a studio for a few days; but now deciding that a real London residence with a studio would be advisable they took a three-years lease of Chelsea Lodge in Tite Street. As with Morgan Hall, so with Chelsea Lodge, the house became a lasting home. Morgan Hall was given up only at Christmas in 1911, while after the three-years lease expired Abbey bought Chelsea Lodge, and it was there that he died. It is a pleasant house, at the corner of Dilke Street, close to the river, but not on it, with two large studios and a shady, partly-paved garden within whitewashed walls. This garden is overlooked by a spacious, oak-panelled dining-room, the chimney overmantel of which, dated 1650, came from an old oak room in Essex which Abbey bought many years before and set up in the room underneath his studio in Bedford Gardens.

We find him in a sportive mood in January. His young friends Ruth Daniel, one of the daughters of the late Provost of Worcester College, and Alfred Parsons's niece, Phyllis Parsons (now Mrs. Hugh Gosset) had started a small amateur quarterly, entitled the *Scarlet*



If e'er I should Travel to Bod's  
I should take with me several Tod's  
And maybe a Brown Biky  
Lest I should be Dickey  
To Frighten away Colley wods



The Fair at the froole at Bod's  
consisted entirely of Cods

At Morning and Night  
(when there fisher best bite)  
the Air'd be quite Dark with  
their Rods



There was a Woman living at Bod's  
who in the night time of Yells  
The Cat in the Kite  
Would come into her  
And never had one of those spells



There was an Old Lady at Bod's  
Who incessantly prayed to False Gods  
She'd burn incense to Baal  
In an old Milking Pail  
Which bothered the People of Bod's

## A CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE

*Runner*, and a copy of the first number—for January, 1899—was sent to Fairford by Miss Parsons. Abbey replied: “I enclose the ‘mun’ for the ‘mag’—and I send you a little thing of my own—absolutely original and perfectly fresh and new. I don’t dare hope that it will find a place in the *Scarlet Runner*, but with all its faults it came from the heart. I was much interested in the publication, and read it nearly all. I never knew before about Bods, and it reminded me of several things that *might* have happened there, which I have embalmed in appropriate verse—which is at your disposal should you care to have it. Mrs. A. likes it very much indeed. There are pictures to the poetry. All high-class pictures—some quite crowded ones and some with only one or two figures in them. But you mustn’t think I didn’t take pains with them on that account....”

Miss Parsons, of course, requested that the Bods series might be sent, and a few days later Abbey despatched them with this letter:

“Morgan Hall,  
Fairford, Gloucestershire.

“MY DEAR PHYLLIS,

“January 25th, 1899.

“I hasten to send my little things—although it is with the greatest diffidence that I submit them to the editorial ‘I’ (it used to be ‘we’). Please don’t hesitate to correct any errors in spelling and false quantity or anything queer in the grammar.

“(I used Brown’s Grammar and Greenleaf’s Arithmetic.)....

“We are having ructions with the maids—one went yesterday and another to-day, both on their bikes. The last bikes the maids of this house shall own.

“Mrs. Abbey sends her love—or would if she were not talking to the kitchen-maid about cooking the dinner.

“Yours always, EDWIN A. ABBEY.”

Four drawings are reproduced here. As is so often the case with amateur periodicals, the fourth number was the last.

In March the Abbeys moved into Chelsea Lodge, although it was far from ready for them. (Writing to Mr. Spielmann, on the 11th, Abbey says: “The stairways are full of men carrying things different

## A LONDON HOME

ways—ladders mostly"), but in spite of inconveniences he was able to paint, his immediate work being the completion of "Who is Silvia?" and "O Mistress Mine, where are you roaming?" for the Academy; the completion of "A Poet" (repainted) for Mr. Taylor in New York; and the beginning of "The Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester." "Since I came back from Italy," he tells Mr. Spielmann, "I have repainted entirely 'A Poet,' which was in last year's New Gallery.... In fact it was largely on account of its shortcomings that I went down there. It is vastly improved, and its companion 'The Dance' [afterwards entitled 'A Measure'] is well on its way." He was also this spring busy with Mr. Swinstead on the formal establishment of the Artists' Cricket Club. In the last letter from Fairford he says: "Alas! the big beech blew down in the storm—which makes that shady corner where Blomfield dropped so many catches sunny and uncomfortable."

At the cricket week at Morgan Hall in July four matches were played. The first, against an Eleven of Oxford graduates, was won by the Artists: H. J. Ford 72, Walter Osborne 51, A. H. Studd 31, G. Gascoyne 23. "E. A. Abbey, not out, 2." The second match they lost—against Mr. F. Henderson's Eleven. The third they won very handsomely, G. H. Swinstead making a terrific 139, with five sixes in it, Arnesby Brown 34, and H. J. Ford 30. "E. A. Abbey, stumped J. H. Simmons, bowled E. W. Treeborn, 6." The last match was against the Wiltshire Wanderers, and the Artists were badly beaten, only G. H. Swinstead (32) making double figures. "E. A. Abbey, not out, 0." A letter from Abbey to his brother in August gives some details of the week, which is described as a great pleasure and very invigorating: "A cheery houseful of chaps—some of whom were really good musicians. We had the whole lot in the house this time—and it was pretty full. James composed an oratorio every evening upon the events of the day, and was really funny. We had a lot of cripples. Studd kept wicket and batted two days with a badly sprained ankle. Gascoyne cracked a tendon in his leg. Blomfield knocked his thumb out of joint and had to leave for home. And despite all we were cheerful.

“A LOVE SONG, A LOVE SONG.”

CLOWN SINGS :

“O MISTRESS MINE, WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING ?  
O STAY AND HEAR YOUR TRUE LOVE'S COMING.”

Eight feet by five feet.

“TWELFTH NIGHT,” ACT II, SCENE III.







## ACADEMIC DUTIES

"I've got a lot of work on hand—have finally got the commission for the reredos for the American Church in Paris and expect to get at it this autumn. I'm also at work on a big canvas for the Royal Exchange, London, 17 feet high. I've got a trench dug in the studio to let part of it down in, while I paint in the upper half—but it is a very awkward thing to manage. The 'Grail' is approaching completion, and I *hope* to have it done early next year. Whether I shall or not depends. You will see us over when that comes off. . . .

"I found I was all out of key for town. I am too much wedded to the quiet of the country now, and all the distractions put me out. I am expected, of course, to do many more things than I was when I lived in London before—to serve on committees and attend meetings and to be steward at Benevolent Society dinners (the latter was a fearsome business—nearly drove me mad.) Then one has to be 'at home' on certain days. I didn't so much mind this latter. I saw a lot of American friends I should otherwise have missed. Mark Twain came on the last Sunday with his family; so did Arthur Scribner and a lot more. I saw Dunne several times ('Mr. Dooley')—a very nice chap, I thought."

When the Academy closed Abbey repainted the linings of the sleeves in "O Mistress Mine" and scraped out the head of "Silvia" altogether, repainting this from another model. "O Mistress Mine" was bought by the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and "Who is Silvia?" by Senator Clark, who later bought also "The Trial of Queen Katharine," which Abbey now again set to work upon. On November 4th a dinner was given by his friends to Alma Tadema in honour of his knighthood, and Abbey designed the menu card, Alfred Parsons carrying out its floral decoration.

A letter to Will Abbey later in November again tells the news: "I'm at work on the big 'Henry VIII' (this is the 'Trial of Katharine') which I thought I was finishing last spring (but lo! I wasn't). I've scraped out a couple of square yards—representing some months' work—and am getting things into shape. At last I think I see the end of it. It is too big—and has too many figures (11 feet by 7 feet), and there is too much fuss and trouble over it. I shall not do another on

## "KATHARINE" AND "ELEANOR"

this scale." Among the afterthoughts in the 'Katharine' picture was the decision not to use the famous Fairford windows as a background. Abbey had made a number of studies in the church for this purpose; but ultimately discarded the idea. To have had this beautiful glass in one of the paintings of Fairford's illustrious artist would have been peculiarly interesting. The letter to Will Abbey continues: "I've another picture—'Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester: her Penance' (see *Henry VI.*), and a 'Faust and Marguerite,' and there is a crowd of figures dancing in an Italian garden ('A Measure') for Taylor of New York, and the 'Grail'—which has a spurt every once in a while. It nears completion, thank the Lord. . . . [A very few weeks' work would have finished the 'Faust and Marguerite,' but the propitious moment never came.] I was up in town the other day and saw some good things in Alfred Parsons's studio. Saw J. S. S.'s Boston affair, too. He has an extraordinary faculty for sticking to uninteresting work, modelling relief ornament and so on. He does it so well that it doesn't seem to bore him. He was down here for a while a week ago and helped me out of my Henry VIII muddle. . . .

"I see the M.C.C. has just decided to make the 'over' six balls and to make the 'follow-on' rule optional with the side that is ahead—both good moves—but until they score 'errors' and 'assists,' as in base-ball, the fielding will still be slack—although the improvement in this latter respect has been enormous in the last twenty years. My pitch is rather soggy at present, but we have a better gardener this year, and I can depend upon its being better looked after than it has been. . . . I shall not have many years more of it, in the nature of things, and I get a lot of fun out of it—although I have now given up all hope of scoring 1,000 runs and taking 100 wickets in the same year, although when 'W.G.' was forty-nine he made 1,000 runs before the end of May that very year.

"On the last night of the year the outgoing Council dines the incoming Council in gorgeous fashion at the Academy, and as the old part of Burlington House is really very handsome—really magnificent, part of it, built in the early part of the last century—and as it has been the custom since Sir Joshua's time for each new member

THE TRIAL OF QUEEN KATHARINE.

OIL.

Eleven feet by seven feet.

1898-1900.

"HENRY VIII," ACT II SCENE IV.







## JOHN HAY

upon his election to full honour to present a piece of plate to the Academy you can imagine that the display is rather handsome. Years ago I bought a large silver meat skewer that had been Sir Joshua's property and had his coat-of-arms upon it. . . . I shall give that. The work in connection with the Academy is rather heavy for me for the next two years—a Council meeting once a week all the spring and winter, and once a month all the autumn, and six whole weeks solid on the Judging and Hanging Committees. With 13,000 pictures sent in, and barely room for 1,500, although 2,000 are hung—it is no joke. I am also supposed to put on knee breeches and a shad-belly coat and go to a Levee, but of this anon.

"I wonder if you've seen Millais's *Life*. I dare say it isn't published in America, but it is extraordinarily interesting, and you should get hold of it and read it."

The last letter of a rather unsettled year, although there was no foreign travel in it, that I quote from, is to John Hay. The date is December 21st, 1899: "I saw the other day in a casual number of the New York *Herald* a portrait of yourself so sicklied o'er with lines and marks that I have meant ever since to write a word or two of sympathy. I have nothing very much to say—save that we are very proud to know you, and that we wish there were more like you, and to send you all our best wishes for the new year and century. Here, everything is pretty gray just now. [The Boer War was in progress.] All our friends have somebody at the front—and many more on the way. Now that the 'Yeomanry' have been called out, one wonders who will be left! One realises how much of one family England is. It isn't so much so with us in America. It makes one feel elderly to see that your boy is man enough to go out and beard Oom Paul in his lair. It seems to me he will have a very interesting experience and one that will be unique—for I don't believe there are many people just like Kruger. If he succeeds he will have something to be very proud of. One wonders how all these things are to end. My own very peaceful occupation seems trivial enough in the face of all this anxiety, but I find it engrossing—and hope I am doing better. . . .

## BRIDGE ARCHITECTURE

"I saw the other day in some paper sent from home a hideous monstrosity in the way of a bridge which it is proposed to build across the Potomac to Arlington. Gothic architecture has no business in the Potomac (I suppose this was meant to be Gothic—in combination with iron trusses). There is no problem in bridging the Potomac just there that a good architect could not cope with, and it does seem to me that, with the fine classic tradition existing in Washington, something like the Ponte Molle outside Rome, or even the St. Angelo bridge, would be far finer, more elegant, and more appropriate. There is no necessity for iron girders just there—that I know of. The accompanying letterpress intimated that the President had set his heart upon this scheme, which is certainly fine and fitting in every way—but do urge him to have the right thing. That fortified German towered affair is surely just the wrong thing. There are some inadequate pictures of the bridges I mention in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, but I dare say the President knows the originals. It is a splendid opportunity for building a fine thing—and needs a man as good as McKim....

"The difficulties of my old headquarters in Franklin Square are rather melancholy.... Alden is the only one of the old ones left. Conant, T. Davis, Reinhart, Eytinge, all dead. I well remember the row there was when Eytinge illustrated 'Little Breeches' for the *Weekly* and *Every Saturday* 'simultaneously,' so to speak. And I won't say I sat to Reinhart for 'Banty Tim,' but I think I did."—"Little Breeches" was, of course, one of the poems in Hay's *Pike County Ballads*, "Banty Tim" another.



## CHAPTER XXXIV

# MORE SHAKESPEARE, IN OIL AND IN BLACK- AND-WHITE, AND COMPLETION OF THE “ HOLY GRAIL ” SERIES

1900-1902 Aged 47-50

St. Gaudens—McKim—Henry James—“The Trial of Queen Katharine”—“The Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester”—A Royal Academician’s Duties—The Paris Exhibition—Contracts for Shakespeare’s Tragedies and *The Deserter Village*—The Athenæum Club and Henry James—Queen Victoria’s Funeral—Abbey Commanded to Paint the State Picture of the Coronation for King Edward VII.—The Critics of the Tragedies—The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists—Henry James on Morgan Hall—The “Holy Grail” Frieze in Place—A Pennsylvania University Degree

A LETTER to William Abbey on February 17th, 1900, reports progress: “We were in Paris for a week—came back last week. I was one of the jury for the selection of the works for exhibition by Americans abroad at the International Exhibition.... The jury were Gari Melchers, Dannet, Alexander, Harrison, Millet, and John Stewart. .... Gertrude and I dined with St. Gaudens one evening, and went to see his big Sherman statue, which is very fine and impressive—perhaps his best yet. He looks far from well. .... I’m obliged to send the ‘Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester’ to Paris, as I haven’t got anything else. I can’t borrow anything. The owner of my ‘Richard’ and ‘Lear’ absolutely refuses to lend them or either of them. .... I’ve tried him in all directions—through every body of influence I can think of. Nogo.”

As it happened Abbey sent only the “Hamlet,” and that was hung not among British pictures but American. The following passage from a letter to Abbey, dated March 8th, 1900, from Sir Isidore Spielmann, Secretary of the Fine Art Committee for the Exhibition, gives the reason. “I regret to inform you that the French Executive

## ACADEMY ROUTINE

of the Paris Exhibition have intimated to my Committee their refusal to permit your exhibiting in the British Fine Art Section on the ground that you are an American subject. . . . The Committee greatly regret the course they have taken. . . . We have been invited by the French executive to withdraw your name officially as an exhibitor from the British Section; this we have declined to do, leaving the onus upon the French for excluding you. We all deeply deplore this incident. . . . Sir Edward Poynter has forwarded a formal protest. . . ." The "Hamlet" won for its painter the Gold Medal.

Abbey's letter of February 17th continues: "I've to visit the life school all of March, and all of April is taken up with selecting and hanging pictures at the R.A.—a weary enough job. The Council meetings are fairly dull and stately, and I could do with fewer of these. The amount of business talking it takes to run so elaborate an institution is enormous—and although we relegate as much as possible to sub-committees and special officers, there is enough left to occupy a good deal of time. The most dull is the administration of the various benevolent bequests. There are a great number of these, and the applicants for relief are a very numerous body."

"I went to the Church in Paris I am to do the reredos for. It is a very large and really quite fine Church—and I shall hope to do a good thing, as it is in a very prominent place. Dear only knows when this will get finished! There is to be a Crucifixion in the centre—and in the wings the Resurrection and the Nativity. I suppose the central picture will be some 7 or 8 feet high. I mean to do it in gesso, with the ornaments, etc., in relief. . . ."

Meanwhile the "Grail" series was nearing completion, and on March 22nd we find McKim writing: "Since my letter to you in December, and your most interesting reply, I have thought often of you and, when in Boston, of the coming 'Grail.' As time goes on public interest in the building seems to have increased rather than diminished, and you are everywhere met by signs, or guardians, notifying you to comply with the rules which they have had to make for the protection of readers. All kinds of societies (Knights-

## BOSTON EXPECTANT

Templar, Grand Army Posts, and Sons of Hibernia!) descend on the town and distract the librarian. But the Institution has always been the pet of the city, and Boston is proud—and especially Boston hotel-keepers—to welcome the tourists who come to see the now famous decorations of the Library. The Trustees, and this office, are depending upon your work being set in place this coming autumn as promised. I hear that the approach of Sargent's work is also imminent, for which we shall all be grateful, as a good many of us have gone over to the majority since we last saw you both.

"Your photographs fill me with pleasure and misery. I can get away for an hour or two for a game of golf, but days of cricket under English oaks, on a Fairford wicket, are apparently not for me. The photographs of the game, and of the groups, are perfect, and the portrait of the lady of the house most suggestive of her well-known hospitality; I never before have thought of her quite in the light of 'A Daughter of the Regiment,' but her cap and blazer proclaim the sporting blood which she has hitherto concealed....

"P.S.—I now have, over my desk, the portraits of three mighty expounders of the noble game—W.G. Grace, Daniel S. Newhall, and Edwin A. Abbey at the bat."

On April 28th came a note to Mrs. Abbey from Henry James, written at Lamb House, Rye. One passage runs: "I am afraid I shan't be able to be there—in town—at all this season. When I say 'afraid' that is hypocrisy—in respect to everyone but you and your glorious husband. I lament my farness from you, but I have partial peace here. I keep a delightful impression of my visit to you the other week and a dazzled one of Abbey's masterly evocations. The picture of your beautiful and powerful existence—all peopled with splendid images—hangs here under my lonely thatch and makes me a little less exiled."

To the Academy Abbey sent two pictures, "The Trial of Queen Katharine" and "The Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester." The "Penance" interprets this speech from *Henry VI., Part II., Act II., Scene 4:*

## TWO SHAKESPEAREAN PICTURES

Come you, my lord, to see my open shame ?  
Now thou dost penance too. Look how they gaze;  
See how the giddy multitude do point,  
And nod their heads, and throw their eyes on thee.  
Ah, ghosts, hide thee from their hateful looks;  
And, in thy closet pent up, rue my shame,  
And ban thine enemies, both thine and mine.

This picture is now in the Carnegie Institute at Pittsburgh. "The Trial of Queen Katharine," inspired by Act II., Scene 4, is one of the most intensely dramatic pictures that Abbey painted. He was represented at the Academy also by his diploma work "A Lute Player."

In May or June, before his own cricket week began, he had a few matches. I find him going in first on May 24th against a team of Authors and making 2 before Mr. J. C. Snaith bowled him. The Authors included Sir J. M. Barrie (19), Mr. A. E. W. Mason (0), and Mr. Maurice Hewlett (a score equalling Mr. Mason's, but not out). At Morgan Hall in July the Artists had the joy of reversing last year's result with the Wiltshire Wanderers and beating them. The chief scorers were F. C. Batson 37, G. H. Swinstead 33, and L. D. Luard 29. "E. A. Abbey, b. W. S. Medlecott, o." The second match was against Mr. H. Milward's Eleven and was lost. F. C. Batson was again top scorer with 32. E. A. Abbey 5. The third match was against the Oxford Graduates (including five clergymen) and the Artists won: Dermod O'Brien 76, G. H. Swinstead 49, H. J. Ford 16, E. A. Abbey 2. The fourth match was against Mr. Gardner Bazley's Eleven and was lost, H. J. Ford being top scorer with 32. "E. A. Abbey, not out, 1."

Two more letters may be quoted before leaving the year 1900. The first is to a painter who had asked his advice as to taking a position in one of the schools at South Kensington. Abbey wrote: "I had thought, too, that it would be an educational thing to be about among those things in the Museum all day. This is because I long to spend more time there myself. . . . All these matters, constant visits to the S. K., key one up to keeping in propertaste and proportion. I am sure of this." Abbey was, all his life, an assiduous visitor to museums and art galleries. In his opinion no artist's education was ever finished.

THE PENANCE OF ELEANOR, DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.

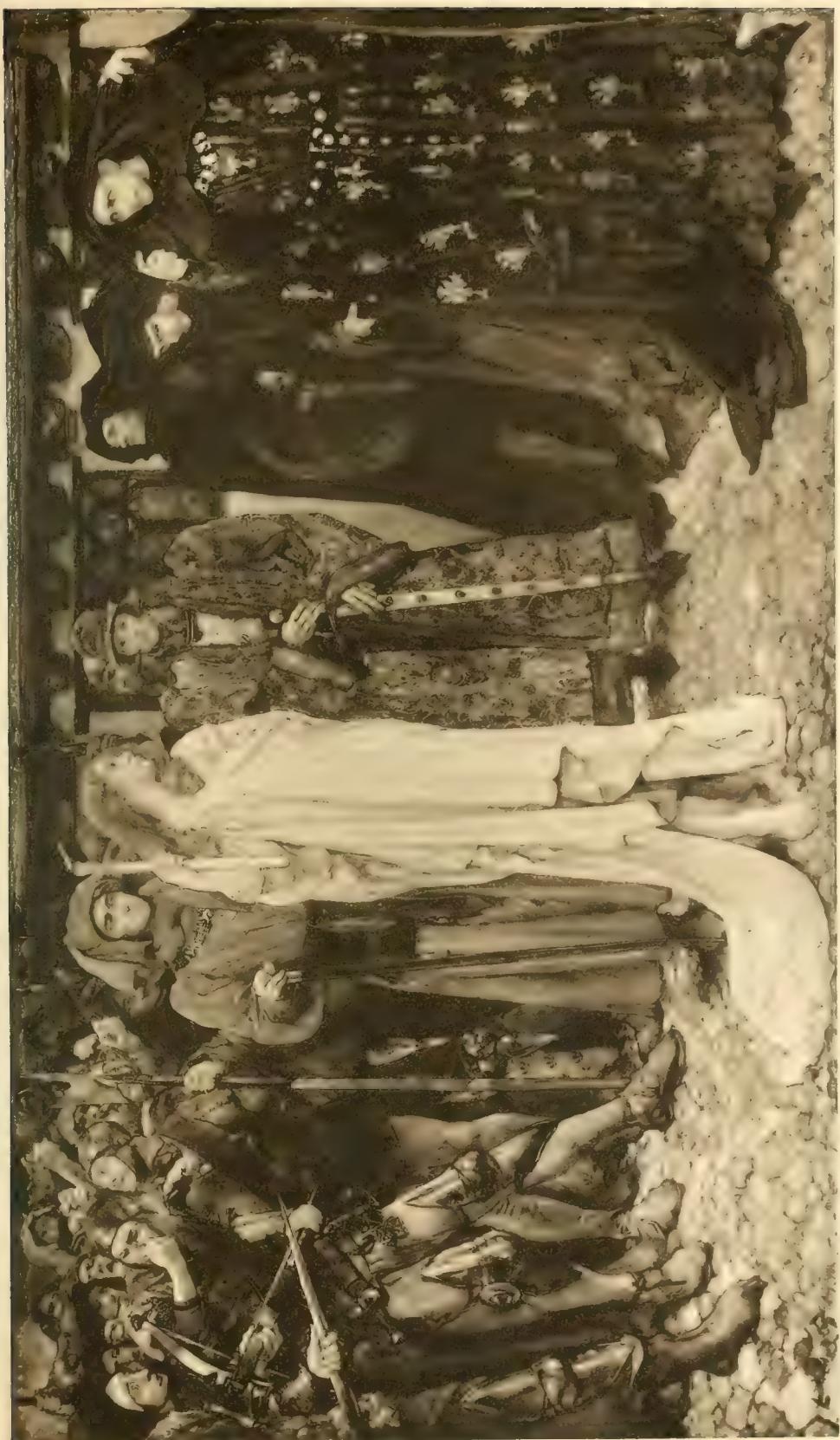
OIL.

Seven feet one inch by four feet one inch.

1899-1900.

“HENRY VI,” PART II, ACT II, SCENE IV.







## THE ACADEMY'S SILVER

The other letter was to William Abbey on December 1st. "My Academy duties are heavy, and I shall be glad indeed when my two years' penal servitude are up. It is a curious old institution—unique in a way—in that it is the only art institution managed by artists, without either Government aid or other outside help. It is small wonder that the more well-to-do of its members have enriched it with legacies from time to time—because one cannot help growing fond of it. Its fine old rooms are filled with relics of dead and gone predecessors. The silver candlesticks on the table at the Council meetings were presented by Benjamin West, and the big silver snuff-box, which always decorates the middle of the table, by Sir Francis Grant. The silver inkstands were given by other members, and the chair in which the President sits is one in which all the presidents have sat. When a new Associate is elected the original parchment instrument signed by George III. is taken out of the safe and read to him by the Secretary, and he signs his name on what is only the second sheet of parchment that has been used for this purpose. But an Associate is never admitted, officially, to any of the rooms set apart for the 'forty'—save on that one occasion—and on the *conversazione* nights, once a year. We are only thirty-seven active Members, and all the work of the place is done by them, save that the Associates may teach in the schools—such of them as are selected to do so; and voting for candidates for annuity funds—there are half a dozen of them—auditing reports, and doing all the thousand things that have to be done in such an immense establishment—is weary work, and now it is extra because we are trying to reform the schools.

"Instead of going on with the 'Grail'—or the reredos for the Church in Paris—I get excited over *Richard II.* or *Othello*, and can't keep off 'em....

"We were in Paris for ten days at the show. Well worth the fatigue. I saw hundreds of things I had always known of, but which have been locked up always in church treasuries. The remarkable thing is that the churches were willing to lend them. The great feature—for me—was the retrospective historical exhibits in every section. It is extraordinary what they had got together.... There were miles

## THE CRITICAL YEARS

of bad and dear restaurants in various languages, and quantities of Oriental dancers, and a lot of mud."

Mr. McCulloch, although unwilling to allow the "Lear" to cross the Channel, had no objection to send it to a loan exhibition of oil paintings at the Guildhall in the same year, 1900; and Abbey was represented also in a little exhibition at Messrs. Agnews' Galleries of pictures painted especially for them. His contribution was "Fair is my Love"—a youth and maiden sitting under a beech tree, the girl in a white silk dress playing the mandolin. It is now in the Preston Gallery. He also contributed a drawing for the private view card.

He had had nothing in *Harper's* between 1896 and 1902, although from time to time projects for work were submitted to him, notably on July 4th of the year 1900, when the request came from Mr. Alden that he would design a new cover for the *Magazine*—but his time was too fully occupied to admit of it. In 1900, however, he was made the subject of "a laudatory" article by Mr. Henry Strachey, illustrated by reproductions of his work, including a drawing for an Old Song that had not before been reproduced.

The critical years in Abbey's life have been 1871, when he joined Harpers'; 1878, when he discovered England, and not only England but Old England; 1888, when he began to illustrate Shakespeare; 1889, which led to his engagement; and 1890, when he was married and received the Boston commission. The year we are now entering (1901) was critical, too; for it was then that the 'Holy Grail' paintings were finished and Abbey was at last free from a task the magnitude of which, although it did not dismay him, had been a source of some concern for his friends. It was then, too, that, with characteristic courage and versatility, he accepted a new commission from Harpers' to illustrate the Tragedies of Shakespeare.

By the terms of the agreement, dated August 7th, 1901, the artist was to make seventy drawings for Shakespeare's plays other than the Comedies, and thirty for Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. The originals of both sets of these drawings were to belong to the artist, and the copyright, with certain reservations, was to belong to the publishers; the drawings were to be supplied at regular intervals within

“ FAIR IS MY LOVE.”

OIL.

Three feet by two feet.

1900.







## ELECTION TO ATHENÆUM

six years, and the payment was to be 50,000 dollars. The serial and book rights in the Goldsmith drawings were to be paid for at the rate of 300 dollars a drawing.

Let us, however, take the year 1901 in due course. In the early months a loan exhibition of the work of modern illustrators was held at South Kensington, at which Abbey was represented by twenty-two drawings from *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Old Songs* and *The Quiet Life*.

The first document is a letter from the secretary of the Athenæum on February 8th, informing the artist that he had been elected to the club under Rule II., an honour which drew from Henry James the following letter:

"The Athenæum,

"MY DEAR ABBEY,

"February 11th, 1901.

"I can't help making you a sign of high pleasure over your election here, in such a pleasant and distinguishing (if anything *could* add to your distinction) way. The only flaw in the thing is that they didn't elect Mrs. Abbey too—though I am sure it gives her exactly as much pleasure as if they had. And also, possibly, a little, that between the bride of art and the bride of life (Mormon that you are!) you'll never come here at all. I think of that ruefully; for I—a strict monogamist—am wintering now (till Easter) in town, and it doesn't seem the opportunity for seeing you that it ought ideally to be. However I've got a little perch now that makes London more easy to me, and it may represent more possibilities and coincidences. I cultivate news of you whenever I can—notably from Jon. Sturges. Please give my heartiest greeting to your wife, and believe me more than ever both yours and hers,

## “HENRY JAMES.”

The first of Abbey's own letters in 1901 is dated February 17th, just after Queen Victoria's death, written to his friend Thomas Shields Clarke, the artist, who had lent him his New York studio in 1897. "We go up to town about the middle of next month and on April 1st I begin my month's penal servitude at the R.A., selecting and hanging. As there were 14,000 sent in last year, and the number

## QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL

of pictures increases at the rate of about 400 a year, I suppose we shall gaze on that many more this year. What in the world becomes of 'em all? It is as well we don't have to serve for more than two years at a time. I suppose it will be pretty quiet in town. It is certainly extraordinary to see a whole nation in black. I saw the funeral, and a most impressive sight it was—more impressive than anything, the dead silence of the vast crowd."

Neither when he saw that silent crowd nor wrote those lines had Abbey any idea as to what bearing the death of the Queen was to have upon his own career. Such foreknowledge is denied us. But only a little later, in March, he undertook, by command of the King, to paint for him the official picture of His Majesty's Coronation. No one had fewer pretensions to be a Court painter. However he may have shrunk from a task in which the personal freedom that he valued so much as an artist seemed certain to be restricted, it was, he felt, impossible to refuse when he considered the compliment that was being paid not alone to him but also to his country. As has been said elsewhere in this book, there were precedents for asking American artists to paint English royal scenes; but they were of ancient date. The compliment to Abbey and America was a marked one, especially coming from so thoughtful a tactician as Edward VII., and could not be rejected. Nor could the painter of so much history that was past be wholly without pleasure at the thought of becoming the painter of history in the making.\*

\* *Punch*, by the hand, probably, of the late Sir Francis Burnand, had something to say about the choice of the painter: "Most appropriately, the Coronation scene in the Abbey is to be painted by the Abbey (R.A.). Let us sing to the tune of 'Sally in our Alley':—

Of all the painters we like best,  
There's none like Edwin Abbey.  
To Co-ro-nation he, full dressed,  
Will go, and nothing shabby.  
He'll look so neat, and smile so sweet,  
As guileless as a bobby.  
Oh, won't the picture be a treat  
When painted by our Abbey !

Probably some French correspondents, who are always 'in the know,' will record the fact that the task of representing the ceremony on canvas was entrusted to one of the clergé du Cathédral, M. l'Abbé de Westminster."







CRUSADERS SIGHTING JERUSALEM AS THE SUN RISES.

OIL.

Seven feet by three feet nine inches.

1900-1901.

## THE “CRUSADERS” PICTURE

The letter to Mr. Clarke quoted above says also that the “Grail” painting, the “Castle of the Maidens,” has just gone off to the Salon. For the Academy Abbey was finishing his “Crusaders Sighting Jerusalem,” an upright picture, 7 feet by 3 feet 9 inches, which is now in the possession of Mrs. Abbey. This picture, which is at once one of the simplest and most imaginative of Abbey’s works, has a remarkable radiance. Story there is none, and yet nothing elaborate could so vividly bring to mind the idea of the Holy Wars. In the rapt face of the central figure we see the spiritual enthusiasm with which so many youthful volunteers dashed in while the old campaigner, who kneels beside him and holds his sword with the reverence of the Cross which it symbolises, typifies the tried warrior who has been through all and knows all.

Abbey’s first cricket match in 1901 was on May 14th, against an Eleven brought together by Mr. Walter Frith. The Artists won, Abbey making 2. A week later he played against Sir J. M. Barrie’s Eleven and made 4—not a great score, but memorable since it came all from one stroke. The rival captain also made a 4; but the top scorer among the Authors was Sir A. Conan Doyle, with 91. He also took eight wickets and made victory sure. Playing against the Savile Club, Abbey fell to one of his own men, Mr. Dermot O’Brien, who had chosen to play for the other side. In this match Mr. Swinstead made 135. In a match against an Eleven of Authors assembled by Mr. E. W. Hornung at Esher, Abbey made 0 not out, and caught Mr. Frankfort Moore. Since Sir A. Conan Doyle was on this occasion able to make only 2, the Artists won.

The first match of the cricket week was on the Balliol Ground on July 8th, against the “Cygnets” and ended in a draw greatly in the “Cygnets” favour. On July 9th, on the Morgan Hall ground, the Wiltshire Wanderers again defeated the Artists. “E.A. Abbey, not out, 3.” The next match, a return, against the “Cygnets,” the Artists also lost: A.H. Studd 36, Walter James 23, and G.H. Swinstead and Henry Ford 22 each. “E.A. Abbey, not out, 0.” The most dangerous man on the other side was W. Beach Thomas, whose despatches in the late War were so eagerly followed by readers at home, who made

## ABBEY AND SHAKESPEARE

51. The third match the Artists won—against Mr. R. Dimsdale's Eleven, the bowling of G.H. Swinstead being very deadly. The highest scorers were A.H. Studd 80, L.D. Luard 30, and Dermot O'Brien 30. "E.A. Abbey, not out, 0." The final match, against Mr. H. Milward's Eleven, was lost. "E.A. Abbey, not out, 4."

In the same month (July) is a letter which lays new emphasis on Shakespearean influence in Abbey's career. We have seen him beginning his life in England by making drawings of Stratford-on-Avon; one of his last and finest English water-colours was the "Mariana" from *Measure for Measure*; he illustrated the Comedies; the first oil-painting to bring him fame was the "Richard," to be followed by other Shakespearean paintings taken from *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* ("Who is Silvia?"), *Twelfth Night* ("O Mistress Mine"), *Henry VI.*, and *Henry VIII.*; he designed complete costumes for *Richard II.* for Irving; and he was now, in 1901, meditating upon the Tragedies for *Harper's*, which were to occupy him for years. Even while thus engaged, a letter came from the University Press at Cambridge, U.S.A., asking him to co-operate in the "most sumptuous edition of Shakespeare's works which has yet been produced," in forty volumes, by providing each volume with a frontispiece. The Harper commission made, however, the acceptance of this invitation impossible.

Concerning the illustrations to the Tragedies (which have not yet been printed in book form) Abbey was involved in much correspondence with the firm. It will be remembered that when the illustrations to the Comedies were published there was a commentary by Andrew Lang. It was considered, however, that it would be better to give each Tragedy to a separate writer, and the late Theodore Watts-Dunton was, at Abbey's suggestion, appointed Editor-in-Chief of the series, so far as the literary side of it was concerned. Among the writers whom Abbey suggested to assist the scheme were Swinburne, Richard Garnett, George Wyndham, Joseph Knight, Arthur Symons, William Archer, and M. Jusserand. Although it is anticipating a little, it may be said that the critics consisted of Swinburne, who wrote upon *King Lear*, *Richard II.*, and *Othello*; Joseph

KING RICHARD THE SECOND

WATER-COLOUR, DONE FOR REPRODUCTION IN COLOUR.

Twenty-two and a half inches by fifteen and a quarter inches.

1901.







## A BAND OF CRITICS

Knight, on *King John*; Arthur Symons on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Troilus and Cressida*; Ernest Rhys on *Richard III.* and *Henry VI.*; Harold Hodge on *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus*; Lewis Campbell on *Henry IV.*; Churton Collins on *Henry VIII.*; William Sharp on *Timon and Titus Andronicus*; James Douglas on *Anthony and Cleopatra*; and F. Warre Cornish on *Henry V.* Watts-Dunton wrote upon *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*. The articles made no reference to the work of the illustrator, artists and critics being entirely independent; but in one of Watts-Dunton's letters to Abbey is this passage regarding the *Lear* drawings: "I cannot refrain from sending you a word of congratulation upon your superb 'Goneril' and 'Regan.' Swinburne joins with me in thinking that no painter has ever been so fortunate in illustrating Shakespeare. They are as terrible as the characters Shakespeare drew. If you are only half as successful with any of your other designs this series will make you immortal."

We shall come to the illustrations in due course, as they were from time to time published in the magazine. Enough to say here that Abbey was, in July, 1901, at work on *Lear* and *Richard II.*, while he was also turning now and again to redrawing, and adding to, the illustrations which he had begun in 1889 for *The Deserted Village*, and which were to see the light in *Harper's Magazine* in 1902.

In 1901 Abbey was elected to the Associateship of the American Academy of Design. In this year he was also chosen as President of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, thus becoming the fifteenth President, in succession to Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A. (elected in 1842), Eastlake, Grant, Leighton, Millais, Tadema, Burne-Jones, Watts, Orchardson, Herkomer, Edward J. Poynter, and W.B. Richmond. In 1902 Abbey was re-elected for a second year.

Abbey's principal concern in the second half of 1901 was, of course, the completion of the "Holy Grail" paintings—the remaining ten of which were finished by the late autumn. A letter from Henry James to Mrs. Abbey, after a visit to Fairford, refers to one of them—the eleventh—in which the old King Amfortas dies. "All thanks, too, for two days that were, to most monotonous *me*, of a cast really

## HENRY JAMES

romantic, partly because of our castle-crowned walks among golden trees and by silver rivers, and partly because Abbey's studio is in itself the most romantic place in this prosaic age. I retain a great impression of the mystic and wonderful and white samite process going on there and renew my benedictions. I hope he [Amfortas] on his side has not been reduced again to curses, but is now all permanently peaceful and painless. I felt a good deal overwhelmed and crushed by your Gloucestershire parkiness and amplitude and your autumn leaves scattered on the sward like sovereigns on a bank-counter; but I am recovering myself a little, and this little corner, now that I am back here, affects me afresh as peculiar and special—to make up for the lack of the grand, the glittering Gloucestershire generalisation."

Before being taken to America the paintings were, at the invitation of the Corporation of London, exhibited from October 28th to November 19th at the Guildhall, where they excited great interest. On November 23rd the artist and his wife sailed for New York, taking the paintings with them, and these were exhibited again, at the American Art Association, in the same room in which the first half had been shown. In January, however, they reached their abiding home, Boston, where their creator himself saw them safely set in place, thus making a harmonious whole of the beautiful story which he had so long ago projected. While this task was in progress the Abbeys were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Sears at 12 Arlington Street. A letter from Mr. Solomon Lincoln, President of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library, acknowledging the fulfilment of this notable commission, contains the following resolution passed at the meeting of the Trustees on July 14th, 1902:

"The Trustees of the Boston Public Library desire to express to Mr. Edwin A. Abbey, upon the completion of his work for this institution, their great satisfaction with the subject he has chosen, and the attractive manner in which it has been executed. They hope that the fine results of Mr. Abbey's genius in making so beautiful this room of the Library by the representation of a romance dear to the poetical and religious heart of Christendom may open new fields

GALAHAD OVERCOMES THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

OIL.

Eleven feet by eight feet.

1895-1901.

A PANEL OF THE HOLY GRAIL FRIEZE IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.







GALAHAD AT THE CASTLE OF THE MAIDENS.

OIL.

Twenty-two feet by eight feet.

1895-1901.

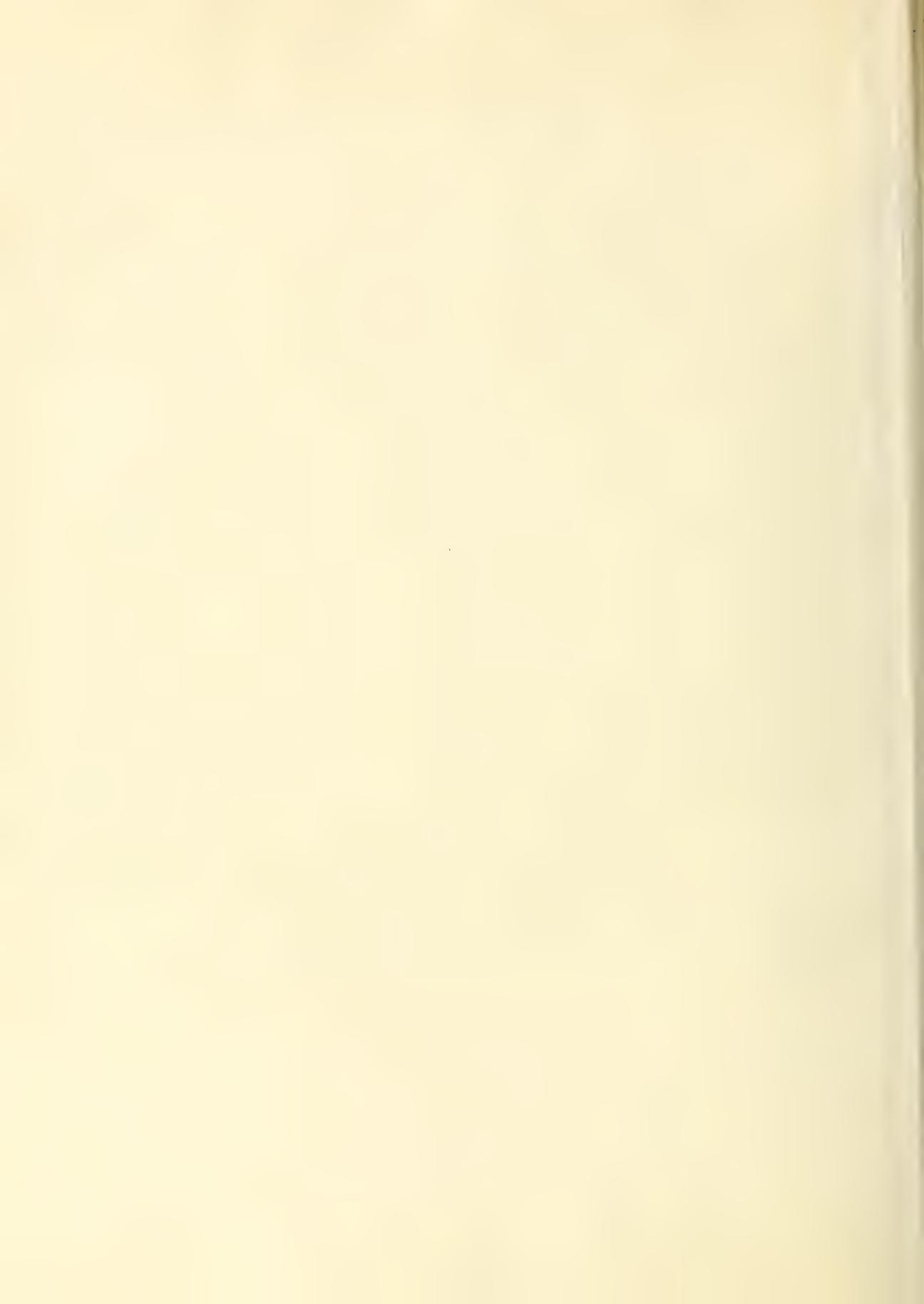
A PANEL OF THE HOLY GRAIL FRIEZE IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.











## THE FRIEZE COMPLETE

for his gifts, and in these days of engrossing outward activities lead many, by the enjoyment of this painting to some deeper and more generous interest in Art and Literature."

Before leaving for England Abbey received another distinction, in the shape of an honorary degree—Doctor of Laws—conferred by the University of Pennsylvania. The date was Washington's birthday, February 22nd, 1902, and Dr. Howard Furness, the Shakespearean scholar, introduced the artist to the assembly in the following terms: "We have invited to be present on this occasion Edwin Austin Abbey because to a rare degree he possesses a poet's fine imagination, combined with a most sensitive eye, and interpreted by a most skilful hand. What his 'imagination bodies forth' his brilliant pencil

turns . . . to shapes, and gives to airy [grace]  
A local habitation and a name.

He has shown his worship of Truth by discerning the Beautiful in all things. France has enrolled him in her 'Legion of Honour,' and the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts and the Königliche Akademie of Bavaria claim him as an associate and a peer. And, in addition, by the wide arch of his fame, spanning an ocean, he binds anew that Royal Academy of Art, whereof he is a Fellow, whose early President was born, a hundred and fifty years ago, on this happy soil which is 'washed by the Delaware's waters.' And yet in spite of these lofty honours and incentives he persists in breaking the laws of his own 'mute and motionless' art by making his pictures speak and breathe. Wherefore we present him to the Provost to receive from the University the Academic Degree of Doctor of Laws."

In Philadelphia the new LL.D. and Mrs. Abbey stayed with the late Dr. J. William White, and while there paid a flying visit to Washington, to the White House, to see President Roosevelt and his family, and to John Hay's, and Abbey superintended the hanging of his "Trial of Queen Katharine" in the Corcoran Gallery before it passed into the private collection of Senator Clark. Certain happenings at Philadelphia which were to have a momentous influence on Abbey's career are postponed to a later chapter.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE CORONATION

1902

King Edward's Illness—The Postponed Ceremony—Abbey's Description of the Service—Abbey in the Cricket Field—Archbishop Temple—The Bruges Exhibition—The Coronation Picture—Royal Interest and Suggestions

THE great event of 1902 was the Coronation of King Edward VII., which was made even more noteworthy by the circumstances which led to its postponement. The ceremony, it will be remembered, was fixed for June 26th; everything was in readiness; the holiday had indeed begun; the bonfires were built, and the oxen to be roasted whole were slain; and then like a bombshell came, on June 24th, the news that the King was critically ill. Abbey, however, had already begun his work, and for some days had been at Westminster preparing his sketches in order that his task at the ceremony itself, to fill in the positions of the various chief actors, might be the more readily accomplished. The building was full of carpenters and other operators, and the first intimation that those there had of it was through the cessation of all work, while everyone fell on his knees and prayers were said for the recovery of the King.

Happily the recovery was rapid, and by August 9th his Majesty was equal to the ordeal of facing the deferred pomp and circumstance. A letter from Abbey to Mr. Alden of *Harper's Magazine*, on August 12th, tells us something of the ceremony; a letter to his brother tells more. Let us take first that to Mr. Alden: "Mrs. Abbey and I were in a specially built box behind the figure of Edmund of Lancaster—whose worn effigy with its face turned to the altar has been present at all the coronations since 1296—and were the only persons not connected with the ceremony who were so close. I was so near that I was able to offer the old Archbishop a glass of wine when he was carried (literally carried) to his chair, after the homage, by the Bishops of London and Winchester. He didn't have it! The age and

## THE CORONATION

infirmity of the Archbishop (Temple) made all that part of it most pathetic. He is nearly blind—and his part of the service was printed in large letters on scrolls, and held up before his face by the Bishop of Winchester. It all meant history and traditions—and the present representatives of historic names who held hereditary privileges certainly looked their parts in their robes and coronets. The finest looking was the Duke of Somerset with the ‘orb.’ He stands about six feet six. There is much to remember and put down—and I hope to be able to do it as no one else—save Bodley, the historian of the occasion—is likely to—not being near enough really to see what went on.”

To his brother he wrote: “I am still in this darksome town (I don’t know when I have been here before at this time of year) getting together the composition for my picture of the great event. This is not easy, for the principal personages insisted upon standing in front of each other and spoiling the general effect, which was really magnificent. We left here about 7.30 a.m., and got into the line of carriages in about ten minutes. Our cards admitted us to the west door, where the Kings and Court entered, and the peers and peeresses. The latter had their trains let down for them and spread upon the floor by two gentlemen. Nobody but peeresses had trains upon this occasion.... We marched up the dark nave—it was very dark—where only a few people were as yet seated. The only one I knew was Sir Harry Johnston, who was a painter before he was an explorer. He wore the green silk mantle of the Victorian Order, and everybody had something unaccustomed on. Judges in wigs and gowns—and all sorts of doctors and members of various orders—heralds in tabards and gentlemen of the Court in white knee-breeches and stockings and gold-embroidered coats. I might have worn my Pennsylvanian gown and hood, but I forgot it, and wore only the R.A. court-dress of dark purple cloth and gold braid. The sword was awfully in the way in the carriage, and also in my box in the Abbey... Gertrude wore the dress she wore at the Court—minus the train. In the choir stalls we stopped to talk to the Douglas Robinsons and congratulated them on their splendid places. Mrs. Robinson is President Roosevelt’s sister, and was specially invited.

## THE CORONATION

"We walked to my place in the tomb of Edmund of Lancaster ('Crookback'), who had been lying there since 1296—quite a while. After I got all my chairs settled, and my easel and sketch books arranged, I went out to see the peeresses arrive. It was a sight indeed. They had white satin dresses and long trains of crimson velvet and ermine capes—trains and their coronets in their hands. They came by twos and threes and dozens, and were marvellous to behold. I never saw so many jewels in my life. They were on the side that I was—in the north transept—but I couldn't get across the 'theatre,' which occupied the whole middle of it. We were a little too early, and might as well have been half an hour later—when the nave and choir would have been full, but after all we saw more than we could hold, and it was fortunate I had been able to sketch at the rehearsals or I should have been in a great muddle. Unfortunately the morning was very dull and dark, and the Abbey, always a gloomy place, was so dark that it was difficult to see details. In front of us were the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of London, Ely, and Winchester in their copes, and, at the right, some thirty other bishops who did not take part in the service. We were very near—almost too near at times. . . . The poor little Dean (Bradley) . . . almost dropped the Chalice and forgot to give it to the Queen until he was prompted. Between the Dean and the Archbishop, who is very tottery and quite blind, we all had many anxious moments.

"You will probably have read many accounts of it all. Most of those I have seen are inaccurate, and the pictures absolutely so, principally because the authors could not possibly see what went on. . . . We were provisioned with some 'Plasmon' biscuits, some sandwiches, and a bottle of Hock! We got away—with difficulty—about two, and into the headmaster's of Westminster School—Dr. Gow, in Dean's Yard—where we lunched. A very highly decorative luncheon party—Tadema and Poynter in all their ribbons and orders, Justice Phillimore in all his gorgeousness of scarlet gown and full-bottomed wig, and many ladies. It was a very remarkable day.

"I have in the studio here the King's 'colobium,' 'sindonis' and 'supertunica,' and stole of cloth of gold embroidered with the rose,

## THE ROYAL VESTMENTS

shamrock, thistle, and gryphon—rather handsome, but not good in shape, and too brassy a gold to be good. I've also Lord Lansdowne's coronet and gown, Lord Colville's ditto, the Bishop of Oxford's cope, the Herald's crown and tabard, the Serjeant of the House of Commons's coat and breeches, and various other properties. I am to have all the vestments and togs generally, and have the whole composition in, and hope to get the whole thing underway and well on by the spring —when I shall have sittings for the portraits. I am going down to Bettleshanger to-morrow to stop with Lord Northbourne, who has arranged to drive me over to Canterbury, and has arranged with the Archbishop to sit to me. I'm afraid the old gentleman is not long for this world.

"I am nearly done to death, and have had no breathing time since I saw you. I had promised to get some Shakespeare drawings done for *Harper's*, and wired into them when the postponement came, and Dr. Morgan worries me about his reredos; but I shall hope that fresh air will help me up again, for I am run down.... I got one day's cricket *v.* Conan Doyle and Hornung's Eleven. We beat 'em—112 to 173, I think. I did little (as usual), but liked the sunshine."

It was in this match, in which I also was taking part, that I first met Abbey. I remember how struck I was by his keenness, marvelling that an American should so throw himself into our game. I remember also thinking that Abbey's spectacles and himself were one and corporate—they so shone and twinkled and drove his good humour and high spirits home. I was struck, too, by his watchfulness in the field; although not captain of the side, he kept a masterful eye on every phase of the game. It was easy, even in the relaxation of flannels, to see that this man had efficiency and grasp.

The letter to William Abbey begins in August, and not having been posted was added to more than a month later, on September 25th: "The old gentleman [Archbishop Temple] was very cheery and resented the suggestion that he was feeble anywhere but in his knees! I made some sketches, while Mrs. Temple took Gertrude to see the Australians play Kent. We lunched there, and then we all went to the cricket match." When the party reached the cricket ground Ab-

## ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE

bey proposed that the Archbishop should change places with him in the carriage and thus have a better view of the game. But he would not. "No, no," he said, "it would be of no use, for I can't see so far as that any longer. But I like to hear the click of the ball." The old prelate also, on another occasion during this visit, remarked to Abbey that he was surprised that no painter had, to his knowledge, ever taken as a subject the words in Psalm cvii., "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."

"Betteshanger being so near Dover—only eight miles distant—[Abbey's letter to his brother continues] we went on to see the Bruges Exhibition of Gothic art for a couple of days, and then back here (Morgan Hall). I was pretty thoroughly tired out and slept nearly a week! I've had to work hard again, however, to get the picture together. These bishops are so fussy about their copes. I've still got the Archbishop of York's, but I expect more next week. I've got the carpet and all the hangings and embroidered arms from the front of the Royal Box. The carpet is magnificent, and is insured for £12,000! It leaves my care to-morrow, thank goodness!"

Since we have seen Abbey launched on this Coronation picture, it may be as well to advance a little into time and complete its story. The moment chosen by the artist for his picture is when the Archbishop of Canterbury, with arms uplifted, holds the Imperial Crown between his hands and is about to place it upon the head of the King, who, clothed in robes of State, is seated in the Coronation Chair, while Princes and Peers raise their coronets and lead the "Great Shout" of the people, "God Save the King!" A ray of sunshine suddenly lightens the gloom of a dark day and falls directly upon the King. Beside him stands the Bishop of Bath and Wells, directly behind whom are the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, and the aged Duke of Cambridge. To the right of these, occupying all the south transept, are the Peers in their robes of crimson velvet with capes of ermine. The Peeresses occupy the north transept, and are therefore not visible in the picture. In raised seats over the Peers are the members of the House of Commons and their wives.

## THE NOBLE COMPANY

Close behind Archbishop Temple, and destined to succeed him, stands Dr. Davidson, Bishop of Winchester, who bears the Chalice, and is the Prelate of the Order of the Garter. At the Bishop's left is the aged Dean of Westminster, Dr. Bradley, and directly behind these, in a line, are the Archbishop of York, in white and gold, who is presently to crown the Queen, the Bishop of London, in red and gold, who bears the Bible, and the Bishop of Ely, who bears the patina. Only two other bishops appear, the supporters of the Queen, who stands between them: on her left the Bishop of Oxford, diocesan of Windsor, and on her right the Bishop of Norwich, diocesan of Sandringham. At her left, behind her, stands the Lady of the Bed-chamber, the Duchess of Buccleuch. The foremost figure in the group to the right of these is the Duke of Norfolk, Hereditary Earl-Marshall, and, as such, the chief organiser of the Coronation ceremonial. About him are grouped Dukes, Field-Marshals, and leading statesmen. To his right are Lord Roberts, Lord Wolseley, Lord Harris, the Duke of Marlborough, the Duke of Fife; close behind these is the tall figure of the Duke of Somerset; next him is the Duke of Argyll, and beyond is the Duke of Devonshire, in front of whom, in his robes of office, is the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury. At the extreme left of the picture is Mr. Balfour, who was there not because he was Prime Minister of England, but because he held the office of Lord Privy Seal.

Above the Queen, in a tribune specially erected, are the Princesses of England, together with some of the Princes united to them by marriage, and the Royal children. The prominent figures in the immediate foreground on the right of the picture are there by hereditary right—the Marquis of Cholmondeley, hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain, Viscount Churchill, acting Lord Chamberlain, and between them Mr. H. F. Burke, Rouge Croix Pursuivant of Arms. Behind them are Sir Hugh Gough and Mr. H. D. Erskine. The artist occupied a position in a specially constructed box in the tomb of Edmund of Lancaster ('Crouchback'), on a level with and directly facing the tribune of Royal Princesses, and at an equal distance from the King.

## AN EXACTING TASK

Abbey settled down quietly to his great task and worked at the Coronation picture steadily all through the winter while he was in the country. By that time, having every position established and the costumes painted in, he was ready in the spring of 1903 for the illustrious company to sit. But they were not, at first, all equally ready for him, and the picture could not be finished until 1904, when it was exhibited in London and elsewhere before being set up in its place in Buckingham Palace. Abbey, it is possible, would have been a happier man had he been able to refuse the commission, for it deprived him of that freedom by which he lived, and he felt the shackles. For example, in a letter to William Laffan, he says: "The Coronation picture grows....but I somehow prefer to invent something. This doing just what you saw instead of what you dreamed is confusing."

The story has often been told—it was, indeed, a commonplace of the obituary notices of Abbey in the American papers—that he was exasperated by the unpunctuality of his exalted sitters; but that was not so. With an exception or two—in each case the defect being quickly amended—the artist received every consideration, and from no one more than King Edward and Queen Alexandra. Originally the figure of the King was painted entirely covered by the robes of State, as it was during the ceremony, but later, to Abbey's great regret, by the express wish of the King, who desired that the Garter might be visible, the robe of cloth-of-gold was thrown back, thus uncovering the legs.



THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII.

AUGUST 9TH, 1902.

OIL.

Fifteen feet by nine feet.

1902-1904.











## CHAPTER XXXVI

### ASSISTANTS

Masters and Pupils in Art—Mr. F. Cadogan Cowper, A.R.A.—Abbey's Helpfulness and Sympathy —Rules for Work—Mr. Ernest Board—Abbey at the Academy Schools—Exercise During Work—Songs and Stories—Visitors—Mr. Swaish -- Mr. W. G. Simmonds—Care of Books—*Sententiae*—The Bible—A Tribute

IT was during his work on the Coronation picture that Abbey realised the absolute necessity of an assistant, and from this time (1902) onward, when he was occupied by the decorations for the Capitol at Harrisburg, there was usually a young artist, and sometimes two, at work with him in the studio. His choice in 1902 fell upon Mr. Frank Cadogan Cowper, now an A.R.A., but then a student of five-and-twenty, just out of the Royal Academy Schools, full of purpose and ambition and not less sincere in his desire for truth than the painter for whom he was to work. Mr. Cowper's engagement began in August, 1902, and lasted until the following spring, when he went abroad. Those who assisted after Mr. Cowper were Mr. Ernest Board, Mr. F. G. Swaish, and Mr. W. G. Simmonds; and although all three belong to a period later than the years with which we are now concerned, their help being required upon the Harrisburg commission, this is as good a place as any in which to assemble their memories of the artist whom they served and loved.

The records of the cricket weeks have shown us in what affection Abbey was held by men at play. That men at work with him were no less devoted we are about to see. But before coming to the personal recollections of Abbey which have kindly been written for this book, there are some remarks by Mr. Cowper on the value to youth of working for and under the direction of maturity which ought to be quoted. "It always," he writes, "seems to me that the art of the country would benefit enormously if the old system of great painters taking young students into their studios as pupils and assistants could be revived—that is to say, the system of apprenticeship. Alma

## MASTERS AND PUPILS

Tadema, Napier Hemy, H. de Braekeleer, the Belgian, and others who have since risen to fame, all worked in this way as assistants in the studio of Baron Henri Leys, of Antwerp, and in this way they in their turn became masters of their craft, learning infinitely more than they could have done if they had merely gone to an art school and then started in studios by themselves. It was, of course, always so with the Old Masters, only they began as pupils and assistants in the great artists' studios at a very early age indeed—sometimes at nine or ten years old—so that by the time they were twenty years old and had got something to say in the form of art, they could say it, instead of being still in the elementary student stage, as nowadays at that age artists generally are."

Mr. Cowper's recollections of Abbey begin with 1896, when, at nineteen years of age, he was studying at the St. John's Wood School of Art. It was the year of the "Richard," and all the St. John's Wood students, Mr. Cowper says, "became more or less 'Abbey mad,' and the sketches at the monthly competitions reflected the influence of this picture—my own sketches among them. But I soon learnt that I ought to have been better acquainted with Abbey's work already, and with the assistance of a fellow student who was more learned in it, I set about collecting the illustrations to the Comedies of Shakespeare, and other drawings of his which had appeared in *Harper's Magazine*. From this time onwards I followed his work with the most immense admiration, and the succeeding years of the Academy Exhibitions are associated in my mind with each of Abbey's great historical or Shakespearean pictures."

Not until 1902, however, did the pupil and master meet, and then, after trying to find a buyer for Mr. Cowper's picture of the graveyard scene in *Hamlet* (now in the Queensland Gallery), which was in the Academy of that year, and putting some illustrating in his way, Abbey invited him to assist with details of the Coronation. "My mind," says Mr. Cowper, "was running on romantic pictures of my own, but I knew what a chance it was to go and work in the studio of a great painter like Abbey." Mr. Cowper began at Chelsea Lodge; later he went to Fairford. Of this experience he says, "It was the

## THE FAIRFORD WINDOWS

most delightful time of my life. Morgan Hall, itself, presided over by Mrs. Abbey, was a most charming house, and everywhere I went about the garden and park I was reminded of her husband's drawings or pictures. The village of Fairford seemed entirely in keeping with his work—and the famous Fairford church windows, which I saw then for the first time and which were a tremendous joy to me, seemed to my enthusiastic mind to have the spirit of Abbey, though I don't know how this should be, unless, as I have often thought possible, these windows had a certain influence upon his work.\*

"I was soon to learn how appallingly ignorant I was, and how slipshod in my methods of work—Abbey's knowledge was simply astonishing. His long life as an illustrator from an early age had made him a perfect mine of knowledge upon anything to do with a subject picture. He had travelled and studied everywhere in Europe in search of material for his work. I think there must have been very little he did not know about architecture, costume, furniture, the arts and manners and customs of all periods of history or anything to do with an historical picture. He said to me once, talking of historical subjects: 'Always look up three times as much as you will want to put into a picture.' And it is this thoroughness which makes his work so interesting, whether illustrations or pictures. Most illustrators are content when they have learnt up barely enough of their subject to get them through with their drawing. I saw him do many of the Shakespeare drawings for *Harper's*, and though the actual drawing itself would only take him an hour or two, he would take days and weeks to get up material for each one, getting new costumes made and more books to study the subject, though his stock of dresses of every period and his library of books would have seemed to anyone else to be already enough for the task in hand. He always said: 'Economise everywhere else, but don't ever economise in the studio.'

"I worked in Abbey's studio six months only, and afterwards wished I had stayed on longer. But he had been so good as to get me some

\*A portion of one of these windows—the west—is to be seen in Mr. Cowper's own picture, exhibited in the Academy of 1907, "The Devil Disguised as a Troubadour Singing to Nuns." One of the windows appears in a drawing by Abbey for *The Quiet Life*: an illustration for "The Vicar," made in 1886, when on a visit, long before Fairford was his home.

## A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

commissions for pictures, and I was longing to go away in the spring to Italy, which he had advised me to do. But ever after this I felt I had a friend in him, whom I could go to for advice upon any matter. For he was always kindness itself in the pains he would take to criticise and help a young painter with his work. And to many young men beside myself he gave a start in life by obtaining commissions for them and introducing them to collectors of works of art. He would always help a young painter in any way he could if he thought he was in earnest with his work.

"With regard to Abbey himself—he impressed me always as one of the most charming men I ever knew, and a very lovable character. There was nothing mean or small about him. He had big and noble ideas. One thing he hated was a business instinct in an artist. Though he was constantly saying funny things, we felt all the time that there was something very wise about him. One peculiarity I noticed was that he had the faculty of divided attention. In a room with a number of people talking he could talk in his usual delightful way to one person or group, while all the time he was able to attend to what another group in another part of the room was saying, and presently he would cross over to them and join in their conversation, having followed it apparently from the first.

"Thoroughly American—and he impressed you as being an American by his accent as soon as he spoke—he loved all English things. He told me his people a few generations back came from a certain village in Wiltshire [Avebury], and he wondered if he would ever go and live there again. I always felt he was very cosmopolitan. He seemed to me to be in touch with all that was going on in the two hemispheres, unlike many English artists who seem hardly to have been outside England or even their own suburb. I felt that Abbey was a citizen of the whole world. But he loved all the old things of England better than anything.

"Latterly I thought his expression became very noble looking, and he reminded me curiously of the portraits of Ingres at that age."

After Mr. Cowper came Mr. Board, then Mr. Swaish, and lastly Mr. Simmonds. "My recollections of my late master," writes Mr.

## THE FRIEND OF YOUTH

Board, "are very dear to me—no experience has been so delightful as the period spent working for him as his assistant. His great enthusiasm in his work, his kindly encouragement of my modest efforts, his sweet temper, and inimitable sense of humour made him a man one was bound to become intensely attached to. Under such an influence, naturally, the work went on with quite joyous enthusiasm.

"I first met Mr. Abbey at the Academy schools when I was a student there. He was putting in one of his few appearances as 'visitor.' It was evening Life Class, and he somewhat broke the usual conventions by going round the class in his shirt sleeves and hat. At that time we students were very full of him, and his visit filled us with pleasure and excitement. What struck me most about him then were his wonderful penetrating eyes—so penetrating that it was not until I had known him for some considerable time that I could face them without a certain feeling of embarrassment."

Mr. Simmonds, as we shall see, corroborates this statement as to the painter's eyes. He also extends the remarks on Abbey's relations with young artists, in the following terms: "His wide interest in students and young artists was always evident, not the patronising kind of interest, for he recognised the mutual advantage of intercourse between the experienced man of long practice and the young man with new points of view. He always said he expected to learn something from *us*, while telling us all that he thought could be useful. From casual remarks, one found that he kept these young men and their work always in mind; his aim being, as he expressed it, 'to get the right man into the right niche.' But he said, 'It is difficult to find niches for everyone!' I believe he judged all artists entirely on their ability, without allowing anything else to influence him, and he always treated slackers with prompt severity. When talking of students he said, 'The more a man knows, the longer it takes you to find out how much he knows.' One piece of advice which he gave and always followed himself was that when you come to the sticking place in a picture, you must attack it with all your energies and make it the best part."

## WORK AND RELAXATIONS

Mr. Board's narrative is now resumed: "Mr. Abbey was an incessant worker. The day's work usually began about 9.30 and from then until the light failed he would be closely engaged with the particular work in hand. When I say 'closely engaged' I do not mean he was 'glued' to the canvas all day. This he did not believe in. He considered it made one stale, so it was his habit every now and then to leave the studio, and—when at Fairford—to take a brisk walk round his grounds. In London he was restricted to roaming about the house for his change. In summer-time, after a hard day's painting, he would get out his cricket gear, or baseball and club, and we would all troop out to the park, and very enjoyable games we had there, no one more keen and 'boyish' than he was. But I always felt very nervous, knowing his short-sightedness, when he recklessly faced rather terrific 'throwing in' at baseball. Fortunately nothing happened, but I always feared it would at any moment."

Mr. Simmonds again comes in here, with an amplification of this passage: "Few things pleased Abbey better than to take up a good catch. We sometimes put the baseball up with a staff as high as we could or threw it with all our force directly at him, and he always caught it very neatly. His other more frequent form of exercise was a sharp excursion round the grounds while the model rested, and when not working from the model he refreshed himself at regular intervals in the same way, returning with new vigour and the useful 'fresh eye' to his work. Sometimes the hunt would pass through or near the grounds, and Giles, the gardener, would burst into the studio and give word, when there would be a general stampede to see them, Abbey well to the fore."

Mr. Board again: "Abbey used to say he obtained his humorous faces for his Shakespearean and other illustrations in the mirror while shaving, at other times he drew himself reflected in a three-leaved mirror. As a visitor at the R.A. Schools I fancy he was rather nervous, and often, when handing back charcoal or stumps after correcting our drawings, he would apologise for making 'such a mess of it.' He always worked in an old soft felt hat, with a hole in the crown for ventilation, and the brim well pulled down to shade his

## SONG AND STORY

eyes. He was by no means a silent worker. He loved to have about him people that he could talk to. He often sang at his work, generally some old ballad. I can hear him now trolling out 'Jock of Hazeldean' with a most decided American accent. His unending supply of humorous anecdotes and his deliciously droll, drawly way of telling them kept those around him in good humour the whole day long."

On this point Mr. Swaish also insists. "If a story," he writes, "came to Mr. Abbey's mind while he worked he appeared not to have the power to resist coming to tell it me at once. The studio at Fairford was divided across the middle by one of the huge canvases which are now in the dome of the State Capitol at Harrisburg. He usually was at work on one side making studies and so on, and I was clambering up and down on the other enlarging these and painting them in on the business side of the canvas. And although we could talk to one another quite easily from where we worked he preferred usually to squeeze through between the end of the canvas and the wall and deliver his yarn on my side of the canvas. Then back he would go, evidently feeling relieved."

It will be best to postpone to a later chapter Mr. Board's remarks on certain original methods employed by Abbey for his great Harrisburg compositions—closing these interesting notes with an anecdote which might have found a place in du Maurier's *Punch* series: "What our Artist has to put up with." Abbey was showing his picture of King Lear's daughters. "After a long and silent examination of the picture, his visitor remarked in reverential tones, 'Ah, Tennyson was a great poet.' In conclusion," says Mr. Board, "I would like to say that Mr. Abbey was the kindest and most lovable man I think I have ever met."

After mentioning Abbey's "generosity, his sympathy, and his freedom from every affectation," Mr. Swaish remarks: "Though I was but a very humble (an inexperienced at first) assistant to him, he did more to make me feel that possibly my obscure influence on the world of Art may be of value than anyone I ever met. He quite *worked* to dispel my youthful diffidence and set me going in a direction that would offer scope for what he kindly thought were my powers.

## MASTER AND ASSISTANTS

His memory, of course, was almost unique and anything he ever saw seemed to be stored in a place always at hand when he wanted it. He was so modest and unassertive that I always found it difficult to bear in mind that he was the great man that he was. Whenever we had any visitors that were numbered among the 'great,' he always introduced his assistants in a way that conveyed the impression to me that as long as a man was an artist he had the qualification to be numbered with the great, too. . . . Mr. Abbey, when I was there alone, worked like a Trojan at the piano-player for my delight. He loved music, and when he knew I did it seemed to give him great pleasure to enjoy it with me."

Mr. Swaish concludes: "I am glad at least to have the opportunity of recording to you my great regard and esteem for Mr. Abbey, and I am increasingly thankful for the privilege accorded me of working for and with him."

Mr. W.G. Simmonds, who was with Abbey during the last months of his life, and who after Abbey's death went out to Harrisburg with Mrs. Abbey to touch up and repair any blemishes that might have been caused to the decorations in transit and while being fixed to the walls, writes thus: "The first thing that struck me in Abbey's appearance on meeting him was the penetrating brown eyes, which searched you enquiringly while he was talking and always with an underlying merriment which soon assured you of his genial warmth of disposition and very keen sense of humour. On further acquaintance I remarked his great energy, and the severity with which he kept his whole mind on his work—when in normal health—always with good temper and buoyant spirits, the last being displayed in his walk, which was always light and youthful. He was very muscularly strong to within quite a short time of his illness.

"I always noticed his great affection for books and the care with which he handled them. He told me that once when he was helping Henry Irving with his proposed production of *Richard II*. he needed some illustrations from a valuable book in Irving's library, and was horrified to see Irving cut the pages out and hand them to him, telling him to take them, as the book could not very well be spared—

## IRVING'S VANDALISM

Irving evidently ready to sacrifice anything to drama. Abbey was also very fond of music and sometimes played very delicately old English tunes and folk songs, of which he knew a great number.

"I am afraid," writes Mr. Simmonds in conclusion, "that my few bald notes do not give much idea of the great affection in which he was held by us all, nor how much we missed him."

A few sentences from Abbey's letters to his assistants may be quoted here. To Mr. Board: "Don't think you *must* show the picture if it is not as good as you can make it. Don't think you must show it just for the sake of showing *something!* . . . You should always have some sort of frame to see your work in. It isolates it from the chairs and wall, etc., behind it."

"I think the Madonna would be better in a *stuff* dress—not satin. White felt—thin felt—is beautiful to paint, and makes very Gothicky folds. . . . Burnet's in Long Acre, near the corner of the lane built by St. Martin, is the place to get the stuff."

"There are two or three ways of doing this subject: old John Gilbert's way, 'out of your head'—smoke—Rubensy compositions of people, etc.; Tadema's way—everything worked out most realistically—which would take you about ten years."

"Leighton did most of his backgrounds and the 'initials' for *Romola* at Gubbio—a wonderful old place."

And to Mr. Cowper: "As to painting at this time (April) in Rome, it will be all right if you proposed painting out of doors—but the Vatican is not out of doors—and as the rooms have not yet probably got the winter chill out of them I should say it would be wiser to wait a couple of months. . . . Anything colder than these Italian palaces and churches and galleries in the winter and spring I don't know. As to its being unhealthy in the summer—Bosh! unless you stay out at sunset."

And from another letter to Mr. Cowper: "I must have expressed myself carelessly to have given you the impression that I think 'it does not really matter much if you have any belief or not.' What I think I said was, that so far as a man's art is concerned the particular form of his religious belief matters little, and is, so far as other people

## RELIGION AND ART

are concerned, of no importance at all so long as he keeps his convictions—or lack of convictions—to himself, and does not make himself a nuisance; although there are many sincere people who are unhappy unless they are trying to make other people see things as they do themselves. I said I have known excellent painters who were R.C.'s. Nearly all foreign painters—except the German painters and the Scandinavians—are bred in that faith. The Japs are Buddhists, and Phidias and Plato were certainly not Christians! That is all there is about it. I was bred in the Church of England—and have seen no reason to change. The Bible is a great book, but I am thankful to say that in the course of a busy life I have come upon several other great books."

Writing to Mrs. Abbey after her husband's death, Mr. Cowper said: "He was the best friend I ever had. I never knew such a lovable man. Nobody will grieve more deeply than we younger painters whom he did so much for. I am sure we all loved him with our whole hearts. I know I did."



## CHAPTER XXXVII

### PLANS FOR HARRISBURG—*THE DESERTED VILLAGE*—AND AN OUTRAGE

1902 (continued) Aged 50

A New Mural Commission —The Harrisburg Capitol—Artist, not Author—*The Deserted Village*—A Protest —Elbert Hubbard's “Little Journeys”—A Tissue of Misstatements—Abbey's Indignation and Corrections

**I**N the two preceding chapters liberties have been taken with time. Let us now retrace our steps for a moment to Philadelphia in March, 1902, before regal pageantry disturbed us, because something of the highest importance then happened. While Abbey was staying there he received a visit from Mr. Joseph Huston, the architect of the new Capitol at Harrisburg, whose purpose was to interest the artist in its decoration. The building promised to be a singularly fine one, and to a Pennsylvanian and to one so intent upon perfecting the art of mural painting, the prospect was alluring; but, on the other hand, having but just finished his great Boston frieze, Abbey was in a mood rather to rest awhile and consider his future with quiet deliberation than so quickly bind himself to another vast enterprise. In spite, therefore, of efforts made by the late Dr. J. William White, of Philadelphia, the surgeon and also Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and by the late John G. Johnson, the distinguished Philadelphia lawyer and art collector, Abbey would not make any other promise than that he would think upon the matter. And thus, when the time came for him to sail for England in February, was it left.

Writing to his brother on his arrival in London in March he referred to the matter. “I am absolutely tired out—slept for days on the steamer—and now I cannot settle to anything at all. I hope to, soon. The only thing I've done is to sketch out pretty elaborately the plan of decoration for the Harrisburg Capitol. This had to be done in a couple of days—and nights—and inasmuch as the scope of the work is really very large I feel that I piled a lot of work into

## HARRISBURG WORK BEGUN

the time; but the reaction comes and my head won't work any more at the moment. . . .

"Tadema has been over here a couple of times and Whistler five or six (he has just gone)—Sargent, too. . . . The Hicks-Beaches came too. We've been lunching with them to-day—at historic 11 Downing Street. Being a Sunday Sir Michael took us all over the Treasury apartments (Balfour lives there) next door. Beautiful old rooms with fine portraits and furniture. We walked across from there to the Choates."

Later he says that he has "by no means settled to do the Harrisburg work. . . . Don't believe anything you see about me in the papers until I tell you it is true." Another passage of interest in the same letter is this: "I hope they won't rush E.A.A. II. too hard at Dr. Thayer's. Let him go in well for his languages. I believe these to be about the most useful weapons a man can have in life." E.A.A. the second, Abbey's nephew, was then being educated at his uncle's expense at St. Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts. Fifteen years later the boy was to fall in the War, fighting with the British for civilisation long before America came in.

In a few months' time, however, Abbey had so far made up his mind about the Harrisburg project that he was working on one of the lunettes. Since the scheme of decoration was, as we shall see, changed from time to time, and the commission did not crystallise until later, it is better to leave the consideration of the matter until a later chapter. Enough to say here that the artist was to receive payment at a rate far more in proportion to the labour than he had obtained from Boston, his powers now being proven, whereas he had come to the Boston work a painter untrained.

To the Academy Abbey sent a pen-and-ink drawing "Tho' Amaryllis dance in green," while to the exhibition of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, of which he was President, he contributed his painting "Crusaders Sighting Jerusalem" and the whole series of his drawings for the Comedies of Shakespeare, to the number of one hundred and thirty-two. At the Academy of Arts, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, he exhibited his water-colour "An Attention."

## THE PENCIL AND THE PEN

Mr. Alden having suggested that Abbey might like to set down for the readers of *Harper's Magazine* some of his thoughts concerning the Tragedies and his theory of illustration, as an introduction to the new Shakespeare series, the artist replied: "I hope you will understand me when I say that a great many more things are expected of me than used to be the case. I am asked to do all sorts of things—to serve on committees; to award prizes at schools; to judge Government competitions; preside at meetings; be president of things; and give advice to fond parents who think their children coming Raphaels, etc., etc., etc. All of these things I get out of whenever it is possible to do so—as my work is more and more complicated and engrossing—and when I do what *I* call 'thinking' it must be about my work. Writing is not my work—nor could I call it my play. It is not my means of expression—and I have too much respect for the profession of literature to try to enter the lists with those who have a right to the space I should occupy. There is quite enough sloppy writing printed—without mine being added to it.

"If I were able to write the impressions the plays of Shakespeare make upon me I could not do the drawings. The drawings fall far short of what I wish they could be, but they are growths from suggestions in the text filled in gradually with details as the composition rounds out. *Words* don't fill out the details—*things* do—architecture, furniture, arms, trees, heads, hands, dresses, etc., etc., and I feel it my duty as well as my pleasure to be guilty of as few historical inaccuracies as this antiquarian age permits. Someone, nowadays, knows a piece of pretty much all there is to know—and I think it my duty to ransack the ends of everything to get things right *before* the purely artistic work is under consideration.

"Students of the reign of Richard II. may depend, for instance, upon the accuracy of the architecture in the drawing of Richard upon the walls, of Richard's dress and armour, of Salisbury's and Albemarle's dress and arms and heraldic devices, and so on. The floating idea is a simple thing—that 'comes.' But the endless odds and ends that go to make up a conscientious, worth-doing picture take time and patience—and nine-tenths of every picture is made

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

up of these details—which are wrong if they are not right. While I am waiting to discover the details of one design numerous other designs will have suggested themselves, or some details or movement I may have been groping for, for a year, may appear out of the mist. For this reason I keep things by me for a long time. I have at least twenty pictures large and larger begun—six or seven in more or less active progress all the time—besides all these Shakespeare drawings. So, when I am down here in the country I am uninterruptedly working out all these various sorts of things, and even if I had time to sit down and write—which I haven't—I couldn't do it. These unfinished designs are floating before me all the time—one or another. A hurried letter to a friend is, of course, to be written once in a way—and I know these will not criticise faults of style, or at least I hope they don't. And, too, I think you must agree that, if an artist's works have failed to express his feelings, they fail of their place in the world. It is a confession of weakness, in my opinion, if he supplements them by writing—or wearing long hair or velveteen jackets."

In *Harper's Magazine* in this year (1902) Abbey was represented by the beautiful *Deserted Village* drawings which he had been considering and reconsidering and perfecting for so long a time, and which now ran through three numbers, and at the end of the year, with a preface by Mr. Dobson, were issued in book form. The published volume, however, was a bitter disappointment to the artist. From it he had expected much, and it fell far short of his ideal. The following passage from a letter of remonstrance sent by him to the publishers—not with any undue haste—indicates the state of his feelings, and again proves with what a solicitous and paternal eye he viewed his creations. The date is March 19th, 1903: "I must not defer longer in putting in my protest about the way you are treating my work. The get-up and arrangement of *The Deserted Village* book were a shock and a bitter disappointment to me. I left all this to you at Franklin Square because Mr. Anthony had done the Shakespeare Comedy books so beautifully that I felt *The Deserted Village* could not be in better hands, especially as I had talked it all over some years

KING JOHN.

Twenty-two and a half inches by fifteen inches.

1902.







A BANQUETING ROOM IN TIMON'S HOUSE.

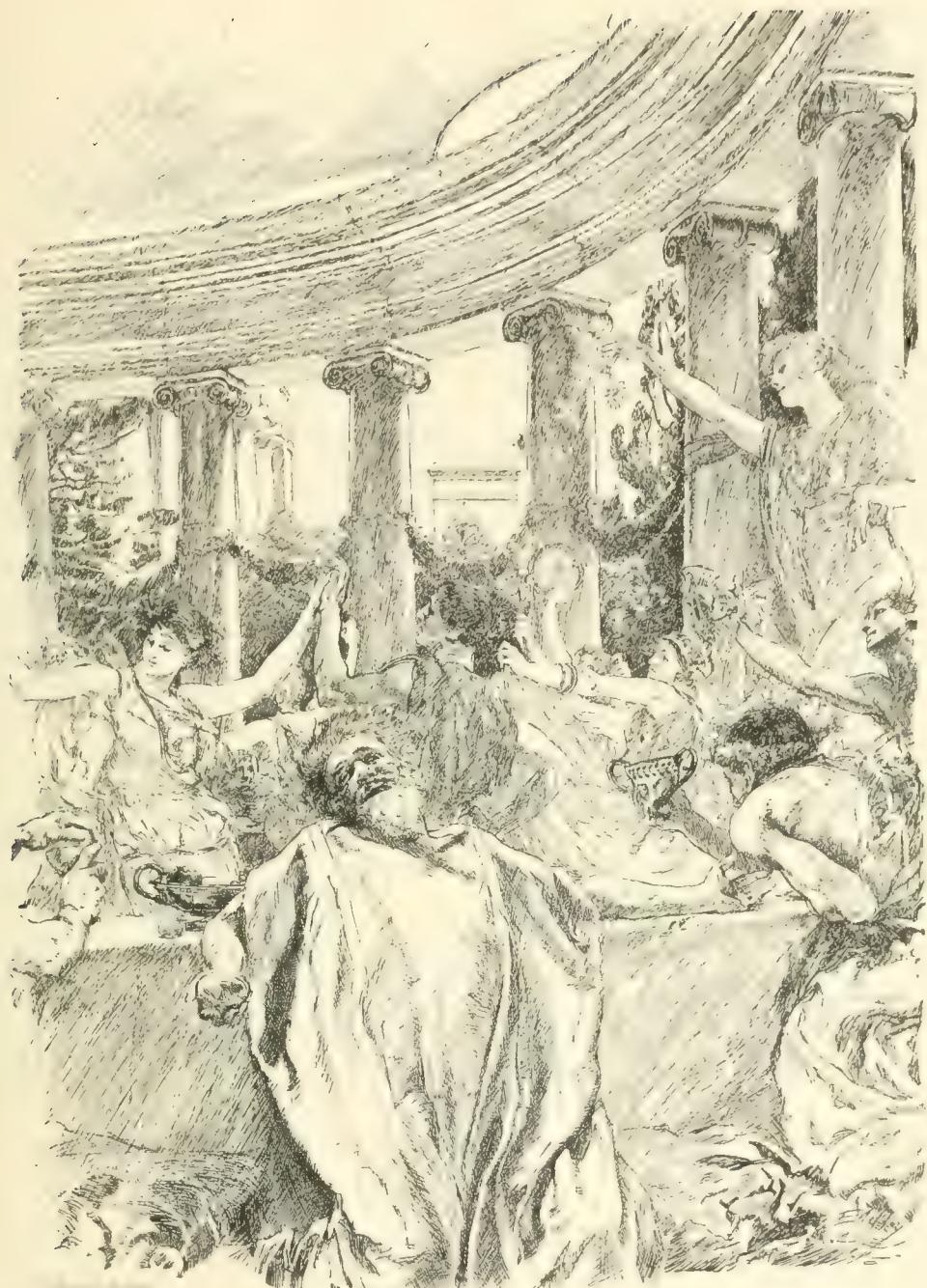
APEMANTUS : " HOY-DAY ! WHAT A SWEEP OF VANITY COMES THIS WAY !  
THEY DANCE ! THEY ARE MAD WOMEN."

Twenty-one and three-quarter inches by fifteen and a quarter inches.

1902.

" TIMON OF ATHENS," ACT I, SCENE II.







## FOLLOWERS OF THE HOUSES OF MONTAGUE AND CAPULET.

MERCUTIO :

"I AM HURT.

A PLAGUE O' BOTH YOUR HOUSES. I AM SPED."

WATER-COLOUR, DONE FOR REPRODUCTION IN COLOUR.

Two feet four inches by one foot five and three-quarter inches.

1902.

"ROMEO AND JULIET," ACT III, SCENE I.

When the colour reproductions of the drawings for the "Tragedies" began to appear in the Magazine the artist was so dissatisfied with them (not one registering true), that he insisted upon the remainder being printed in simple black-and-white.







## TWO PROTESTS

ago at Franklin Square, and had left there one of the early editions of the poem, which was beautifully printed, and upon the make-up of which I took it for granted that my book was to be modelled.

"I never dreamed that you intended to put forth the cheap and vulgar edition that you have published, in type that is simply barbarous, with a cover that is an eyesore, and paper to match—and this before a fine edition was done. The pictures were far better printed in the *Magazine* than they were in the book."

"Moreover, I ought to have been consulted before you placed my portrait in the book as a frontispiece. It was surely out of key with the whole thing, and to me altogether objectionable."

"I earnestly hope that you have printed but a small edition and that you have it in mind to do me justice in a better book—an edition got up in a way that would prove to your public and mine that you have at least some respect for my work."

It was always Abbey's intention to take advantage of a clause in his agreement with Messrs. Harpers for *The Deserted Village*, entitling him to issue the drawings himself in an enlarged size and for this purpose to use photogravure plates of a number of them, made in Paris by Dujardin, but the project has not yet been carried out.

Having finished with the shortcomings of *The Deserted Village* in book form, Abbey, in the same letter to his publishers, turned to another source of disapprobation: "Now, as to the coloured plates of my Shakespearean drawings in the *Magazine*, I must ask you not to print any more in colour. Those that you have done are a libel upon my work. I have not seen one print where the register is true. I have taken enormous pains with these designs, and no money can repay me for the way the *Magazine* presents them. In the 'Richard II.' figure the register is so untrue that even Richard's eyes are made to come in the wrong place, so that the whole thing becomes a caricature. I have begun several drawings in colour for other plays, but, since you are unable to produce them properly, it is best to do them in simple black-and-white. . . ."

*The Deserted Village* was not the only publication that troubled Abbey in 1902. No man, as the reader must by now be aware, had

## THE HUBBARD PAMPHLET

less tendency to advertisement than he; nor had he an exaggerated view of his own ability and achievement. He believed in himself and he liked recognition; but the recognition had to be well-founded. No one could be more fond of the truth than he—the simpler and more direct the better. Hence we may conceive something of the depth of his resentment when in November, 1902, there was published in America a pamphlet which claimed to be an accurate description of the artist and his Gloucestershire home, but which, written by a man who had never seen either Abbey or Fairford, was packed with falsities. The author was the late Elbert Hubbard, who was drowned in the *Lusitania*, and the publication belonged to a series entitled *Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Artists*, the previous subjects having been Raphael, Leonardo, Botticelli, Thorwaldsen, Gainsborough, Velasquez, Corot, Correggio, Giovanni Bellini, and Cellini.

The discerning reader of Hubbard's remarks on Abbey would quickly realise that here was a brickmaker lacking straw, an opportunist distracting attention from his ignorance by digression and jest; but too few readers are discerning, most of us allowing the printed word to exercise such a magnetic influence over us that even after the thousand-and-first disillusionment we still believe it true. No wonder, then, that Abbey, finding himself mishandled and frankly romanced about on every page, was angry. He succeeded in preventing the pamphlet's inclusion in the volume which Messrs. Putnam afterwards issued, but since copies of it are still in existence, and often are quoted from, it will be well to illustrate its gross inaccuracies by quoting a few of the comments which Abbey wrote on the margins. It begins thus:

"Edwin A. Abbey was born in Philadelphia (not of his own choosing) in the year 1852. His parents were blessed in that they had neither poverty nor riches. Their ambition for Edwin was that he should enter one of the so-called learned professions; but this was not to the boy's taste. I fear me he was a heretic through pre-natal influences, for they do say that he was a child of his mother. This mother's mind was tinted with her Quaker associations until she

## GEORGE W. CHILDS

doubted the five points of Calvinism and had small faith in the Forty-nine Articles."

Against this Abbey set the following statement: "My mother was never a Quaker, nor had she any Quaker relatives. There is not a word referring to her in this and the following pages which in any particular describes her or her methods. My parents never intended or suggested that I should become a doctor or a lawyer. They hoped at one time that I might enter the Church (Episcopal). I was brought up in the Episcopal Church, of which my parents were members."

Hubbard went on pleasantly to say that the artist as a child squinted, was beetle-browed and bow-legged; also that while still in frocks he cut the pictures from *Harper's Weekly* (which had not then come into existence). Further that he was placed by a friend in the type-setting department of the *Philadelphia Ledger*, of which his friend and patron George W. Childs was owner, and that it was Childs who recommended him to the Art Department of *Harper's Weekly*. Hubbard adds: "That George W. Childs had a really firm friendship for Abbey there is no doubt. He followed his career with fatherly interest and was the first man who had the prophetic vision to see that he would become a great artist."

Against this Abbey wrote: "I never set type nor had any connection with newspaper work. I never spoke to George W. Childs in my life. I never saw him but once. I have no reason to suppose he ever heard of me. My people did not know him, nor had he any connection in any way with my life."

Hubbard continued: "The pet aversion of Childs was tobacco. All through the *Ledger* office were startling signs 'No Smoking'.... whether the use of tobacco had anything to do with young Abbey's breaking with his *Ledger* friends is a question. Tradition has it that Childs extracted from the youth a promise on his going away that he would never use the weed. The Union Square records fail us at times, but it is believed that Abbey kept his promise for fully three weeks."

This is Abbey's comment: "I never smoked in my life, nor wanted to."

## A FALSE GUIDE

Hubbard continues: "At Harpers' Abbey came into competition with strong men. In the office was a young fellow by the name of Reinhart, and another by the name of Alexander. . . . A little later came Howard Pyle, Joseph Pennel [*sic*] and Alfred Parsons. . . . For a time he drew just like Alexander, then like Reinhart, next Parsons was his mentor."—The foregoing passage deserves particular notice and refutation, because Hubbard's pamphlet seems still to serve as an authority for other writers. The artist's commentary runs thus: "John Alexander, who is five years younger than I am, came to Harpers' as a boy five years after I began there. Neither Howard Pyle nor Joseph Pennell nor Alfred Parsons was ever at Harpers'." None the less, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (eleventh and latest edition), which seems to have made Hubbard's pamphlet its source of information, it is stated that Abbey was at Harpers' in the company of "such men as Howard Pyle . . . Joseph Pennell, and Alfred Parsons"; while in a book published in 1916 by Mr. J. Walker McSpadden, entitled *Famous Painters of America* (Dodd, Mead & Co.), the article on Abbey places him as a printer's devil in the *Public Ledger* office, gives G. W. Childs the credit of acting as his inspired patron, and sends the youth to Harpers' to associate with and be stimulated by "Joseph Pennell, Howard Pyle, and Alfred Parsons." Mr. McSpadden, however, it must be admitted, when narrating these matters, lays no claim to any of the toil of original research, but frankly confesses his obligations to Hubbard's *Little Journeys*. But elsewhere in his article he reaches heights of his own scaling, as when he begins his summary of the career of one who remained an American citizen—"Mr." Abbey and only "Mr." Abbey—to the end: "From a printer's 'devil' . . . to a knighthood from the King is surely a long step."

Hubbard again: "Abbey and Parsons had walked to Philadelphia [to visit the Centennial Exhibition] and back, taking two weeks for the trip, sketching on the way stage-coaches, taverns, tall houses and old wooden bridges all pinned together—just these and nothing else, save Independence Hall.\* Later they went to Boston and did

\* Mr. McSpadden, however, knows better. According to him they sketched "every picturesque bit in sight—stage-coaches, stiles, barnyards, rustic bridges, and what-not." What not, indeed?

## MANY INVENTIONS

Faneuil Hall, inside and out, King's Chapel, and the State House, and a house or two out Quincy way, including the Adams cottage where lived two presidents, and where now resides one, William Queer, the only honorary male member of the Daughters of the Revolution. Mr. Queer dominates the artistic bailiwick and performs antique antics for art's sake: it was Mr. Queer who posed as Tony Lumpkin for Mr. Abbey."

Here are Abbey's corrections: "I went from New York to the Centennial Exhibition, 1875, by train and alone. I never went on a walking expedition in my life. Alfred Parsons is an Englishman. He was never in America until 1882. I never saw him or any of his work nor heard of him until 1879 after I came to England. I was in Boston for just half a day in 1877. . . . I never sketched Faneuil Hall or King's Chapel or the State House. I have never been to Quincy nor seen the Adams cottage nor heard of William Queer. My model for Tony Lumpkin was a professional model in London, where I made the drawings for *She Stoops to Conquer*."

Hubbard again: "Abbey had done Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker Tales*. . . . He worked exclusively in black-and-white. . . . He thirsted to refresh his imagination in England. . . . A *de luxe* edition of 'Herrick' was proposed by the Publishing Department . . . and young Abbey was to go to England to look up the scene. . . . Salary was waived, but expenses were advanced. . . . This was in 1878. . . . Abbey had gone around and bidden everybody goodbye, including his chum, Alfred Parsons. Parsons was going to the dock to see him off. 'I wish you were going too,' said Edwin huskily. 'I believe I will,' said Alfred, swallowing hard. And he did. . . .

"London held them only a few days and then they started for Stratford. . . . They went on foot. . . . They took the road for Oxford. . . . From Oxford . . . to storied Warwick. . . .

"They wanted to be just a little off the beaten track of travel. . . . Abbey and Parsons found a house [in Broadway]. . . .

"Out behind the cottage stretched a God's half-acre of the prettiest flower garden ever seen, save the one at Bordentown, where lived Abbey's lady-love. . . ."

## A CULMINATING FALSEHOOD

The facts: "I never illustrated Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker Tales*. I became a member of the American Water-Colour Society in 1875 or 1876. I, therefore, did not work exclusively in black-and-white. The Herrick book was my own proposition. I ceased to have a salary in 1876, so that a salary did not enter into the question in 1878. All upon this page is utter nonsense. I was to see Alfred Parsons for the first time in 1879 in London. . . ."

"I did not go afoot to Stratford. I went alone by train from Liverpool, and I went because I was to illustrate an article by Wm. Winter. I did not stop at Oxford or Warwick, nor did I see Oxford or Warwick until several years later. . . ."

"I never saw Broadway until seven years later. I never had a house there with Alfred Parsons !! . . ."

"I never was at Bordentown in my life, and I never knew anyone who came from there except Richard Watson Gilder."

As Hubbard proceeded he grew more reckless. The title of his fantastic series was, we remember, *Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Artists*, and his effort to adhere to it landed him in even greater errors. Morgan Hall is "old, vine-clad, built in sections running over a space of three hundred years. . . . There is a goodly brood of little Abbeys—I dare not say how many. I believe it was nine a year ago, with an addition since. They run wild and free along the hedgerows and under the beeches." And in this paragraph came also a reference to Mrs. Abbey, her husband's comments upon which have already been printed in Chapter XXII.

The Abbeys were childless.

The publication of such a tissue of falsities could not but cause annoyance, but Abbey at first did no more than ask his old friend William Laffan to do what he could to discredit Hubbard's impudent inventions. In a letter of December 9, 1902, he says: "I get tired of seeing statements about myself made out of whole cloth, and am often tempted to write protests. I usually refrain—but there has been sent me within a day or two a small book (price 25 cents), which is really more than I know how to stand. It is issued by the Roycroft Press, and is one of a series of pamphlets entitled

## PROPOSED REPRINT

*Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Artists.*—*ABBEY.* The advertisement says that these pamphlets circulate as text-books in thousands of schools, etc., and that the circulation is 60,000. This may be no truer than the contents of the pamphlet, which is an offensive misstatement of facts from beginning to end. What enrages me is what is said about my poor dear mother—and about Gertrude. . . . This little book is absolutely outrageous—in such a way that it is hard to get hold of it.”

Laffan apparently was unable to do anything, for the circulation of the pamphlet continued, and, as we have seen, it became the text-book for the indolent and the hasty. Abbey, himself, did his best to forget it. But some years later the whole matter was reopened in the following letter to Abbey from Mr. G. H. Putnam, who had acquired the rights in certain Roycroft Press publications, and, wishing for a new photograph of Abbey to accompany the reprint, wrote to him for that purpose, referring to Hubbard’s “critical and biographical sketch of yourself, with an estimate (a deservedly favourable estimate) of the present interests and permanent value of your work.”

To this Abbey replied that he had every objection to the publication of the “critical and biographical” sketch in question, and giving his very sound reasons why the thing should rather be burned than reissued. “I am glad,” he wrote, “to know on my own account that you have bought the pamphlet purporting to be a biography of myself, because you could not possibly publish, as a member of an old and highly respected firm, as well as for every other reason that appeals to a gentleman, anything so highly offensive to the subject of the memoir.” He also said: “I consulted several eminent American lawyers as to the possibility of legal redress. In the present state of the libel laws in the United States I learned that no redress was possible and I was advised to let the matter drop and to allow the pamphlet to die a natural death.”

Abbey’s wishes were ultimately respected; but from what odd angles it is possible to view such levity, when one is not its victim, the following passage from Mr. Putnam’s *Memories of a Publisher*, 1915, will show: “I brought pressure to bear upon Hubbard and

## A SUCCESSFUL PROTEST

secured the cancellation of the chapter in the proposed book. He admitted, of course, that he had never made the visit and had in fact never seen Abbey. He had secured some description of Abbey's country home, and he thought that the beautiful English lawn would look 'kind of empty' without children, and therefore he had put the children into his picture. 'A man ought not to get annoyed,' said Hubbard, 'at a little thing like that, particularly when I took such pains to crack up his art.'"



A. A. - before and behind

S. D. M. Oct. 11

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

# THE HARRISBURG COMMISSION AND COMPLETION OF "THE CORONATION"

1903-1904 Aged 50-52

Tadema in Egypt—Remonstrance to Boston—Death of Walter Osborne—McKim's English Honour—Whistler's Death—Art as a Livelihood—A Visit to Cambridge—Signs of Strain—The Harrisburg Contracts—The Coronation Picture—The Royal Exchange Panel

**B**Y the end of 1902 Abbey had begun seriously upon his Harrisburg designs, although the commission was not definitely accepted until some months later. This task, which was chiefly to occupy his hand and mind from now onward, became more and more exacting as it advanced, since he was not only hard to please but continually learning; and his labours were consequently severe. The first letter of 1903, in January, says: "The Coronation canvas is getting covered with personages—none of whom have heads yet.... The crucifix is nearing completion—and I have done a lot of Shakespeare drawings. The painting for the Royal Exchange is well along, too—and so is the 'Dance' canvas."

Among Abbey's correspondents none was more frequent than Tadema; but it is seldom that I find in his letters anything that seems to call for quotation. In January, 1903, however, when he was in Egypt as a guest of Sir John Aird, to make studies for his picture of "The Finding of Moses," which Aird had commissioned, he sent Abbey an amusing account of his travels. "Egypt is funny. The first impression of the people, at least for a day or two, was that I felt like in Beerbohm Tree's theatre, and that they were all the supers of one of his Oriental plays, say *Herod*. It was too funny, and it was funny never to see a woman in the streets of Cairo—all men—and then those magenta sunsets, so queer, so absurd. I never got accustomed to it. And the blacker the people the more black they wore. I saw on the reservoir two boats full of Soudanese, all dressed in black, and their faces were that black that their clothes looked grey

## A PLEA FOR MYSTERY

and they must have been blackleaded afresh that very morning. . . . That inauguration on the 10th won't be soon forgotten by me. Fancy standing in the broiling sun in a chimney-pot and black frock coat for a few hours; it is enough to play the deuce with my system. Assuan was all bunting, and seeing it from the other side of the Nile, with all the red flags in sunshine and transparency, looked like a huge poppy field. It was so cheery. The white dome and minaret of the mosque did well with the red of the flags, and when it all was illuminated the 9th and 10th, when the Khedive was there, it was simply delightful."

On February 17th Abbey wrote as follows to Mr. Thomas A. Fox, who had been concerned with the installation of the "Holy Grail" paintings in the Boston Public Library in the previous year: "Say—I hear dire things about footlights being placed around the foreground of my frieze. For goodness' sake!!! can't this be stopped? My idea of the decorative painting of a room is that it should abide by the conditions of light obtaining in the room decorated. As I have been repeatedly told, the library is not an art gallery—I never expected that it would be—and the light in the Delivery Room is just what I should prefer it should be. It is what I understood it *was* to be before I began the painting, and when I left it—with the exception of the chairs and some of the other furniture—it all looked about as right as I knew how to make it. Now if it is vulgarised and cheapened by rows of electric footlights I shall be disgusted and disheartened—and I wish to protest with all the force I can against such nonsense. If some of the work is more or less in the dark, that doesn't hurt it. It is *intended* to be in the dark. Let us have a little mystery about. We know what is there even if we don't see it all: I am sure you wear socks in winter although I have never seen them. As to the chairs—I think you would have found the small ones very strong indeed. I have had one like it in hard use for fifteen years.

"You know that chairs were a luxury and were very few in the early sixteenth century. People sat on forms or on benches round the room against the wall—part of the room—which is where they ought to sit in the Delivery Room. Why they don't I don't know. I







“POT-POURRI.”

OIL.

Five feet one inch by three feet.

1892-1899.

## DEATH OF WALTER OSBORNE

believe they would if there were no chairs at all. . . ." Here follows a little drawing of the kind of chair that the artist would prefer.

Writing on February 20th to Walter James, who was about to visit Italy, Abbey says: "It sounds most exciting, this trip to see Costa's things. How I should enjoy that! I fear, however, that I shall be the slave of the high and mighty for some time. I am knocking off peers [in the Coronation picture] at the rate of six or eight *per diem*."

A day or so later came an invitation from the P.R.A. to serve on a sub-committee to consider the Fine Arts exhibit at the St. Louis Exhibition, which Abbey accepted. In April he was in Paris to set up full-sized oil sketches of the reredos in place before beginning on the wooden panels, returning to London in time for Varnishing Day; but he did not, for a melancholy reason, play in the usual Varnishing Day cricket match, Walter Osborne, perhaps the most generally beloved of all the artist-cricketers, having just succumbed to double pneumonia. Writing to Mr. Swinstead Abbey says: "It wouldn't do to stop next Wednesday's match, but I won't go to it, I think. It would be a pity to disappoint a good many—but they didn't know him so well, and can't feel about it as I do—so the match itself might go on, but I couldn't get up any heart in it."

Abbey was represented in the Academy this year by his picture "Pot-Pourri," begun in 1892 after his return from Rothenburg, where he had made the study of the white room, and he used this study as a setting for the picture. In 1899 this painting was finished for the late Mr. William Vivian, of Queen's Gate, London, and had now been lent by him for exhibition. An event of the early summer, spent chiefly in the Tite Street studio on Coronation sitters, although Abbey found time to give Onslow Ford sittings for a bust of himself, was a dinner at Chelsea Lodge to McKim, in honour of his receipt of the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects. To meet his distinguished fellow-countryman and colleague in the Boston and other enterprises Abbey invited various representatives of the Arts—Sir Aston Webb, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects and now P.R.A.; the then P.R.A., Sir Edward Poynter; Lord Carlisle, a trustee of the National Gallery;

## C. F. McKIM

Lord Morley, the Royal Academy's Professor of Ancient Literature and a Trustee of the British Museum; Lord Dillon, Curator of the Tower Armouries, and a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, and Antiquary of the Royal Academy; Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Alma Tadema, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (afterwards Lord St. Aldwyn), the Abbeys' neighbour in Gloucestershire; and Mr. Choate, the American Ambassador. McKim's letters, both before and after the banquet, are given. Before:

“160 5th Avenue, New York,

“MY DEAR NED,

“June 6th, 1903.

“Despite my sundry cables, though but half expressing my appreciation of the friendship which prompted you to herald (you were the first) the coming event, and afterwards to propose to celebrate it, I sincerely trust that this may reach you before I do, to let you know how much prospective pleasure and happiness you have given me (albeit consternation occasionally creeps over me as I think of the critical moment so close at hand).

“Never having enjoyed the sensation of ascension to the company of the Immortals, my knees now and again quake a little—but in the light of your presence and that of Mr. Choate and the numerous coats of whitewash so skilfully applied by my friends—I shall try to play the part so at least as not to disgrace the profession.

“As I cabled you—I am planning to sail by the *Teutonic* on the 10th and to reach the Berkeley Hotel probably on the 18th, where I shall hope to hear from you, and to survive it and the following days with such success as Providence and my stomach may vouchsafe!

“With my best thanks for all your kindness and thoughtfulness, and hoping to sit by you at the first cricket match,

“I am, faithfully yours,

“CHARLES F. MCKIM.

“I have some fine photos of your work in our Exhibition I sent last week to Mr. Webb.”

Then, on June 19th, came the dinner, and then this missive from the guest of honour:

C. F. McKIM

“Saturday, June 20th, After the Ball!

“The Berkeley Hotel,

“MY DEAR NED,

“Piccadilly, W.

“—Or Edward Rex! more rightfully.

“I have been in the habit of meeting gentlefolk all my life (with a preference for that kind)—I have occasionally even run across a peer of the realm now and again, both abroad and under his own roof. I have dined in state once or twice with Presidents, diplomatists, and ‘things’ (as you would say) at the White House—but I am quite certain that I have never in my life sat down in a circle of such distinction as that which you and Mrs. Abbey gathered round your dinner table last night. Nor can I imagine a feast more tempting to the fastidious souls and stomachs of those for whom it was prepared.

“It was *deep clover* for me with the bars let down, and I enjoyed every minute as I haven’t anything for a long, long time—and as you knew I would. For this and the judicious coats of whitewash with which you blinded the vision of the committee of the R.I.B.A. when my name swung in the balance between fame—and continued obscurity—I thank you with all my heart, and whatever my derelictions as a correspondent I want you to know how much I appreciate the friendship which prompted you to do me such yeoman service when the time came.

“For these good things and—more—the high privilege of the Athenæum—duly acknowledged to his Lordship—whom I got on with and enjoyed meeting greatly—to Sir Edward, whom I hope and believe I am to meet again—I thank you warmly. I have already lunched at the Athenæum with White [Mr. Henry White, First Secretary of the American Embassy] yesterday, where we saw various celebrities feeding and later calmly sleeping in that fine (bed?) chamber called the library. I slept finely myself last night, and have been hustling about town this morning. When you and Mrs. Abbey recover from the spree I will drop in and talk both scandal and business with you.

“Meanwhile I am, gratefully yours,  
C. F. McKIM.”

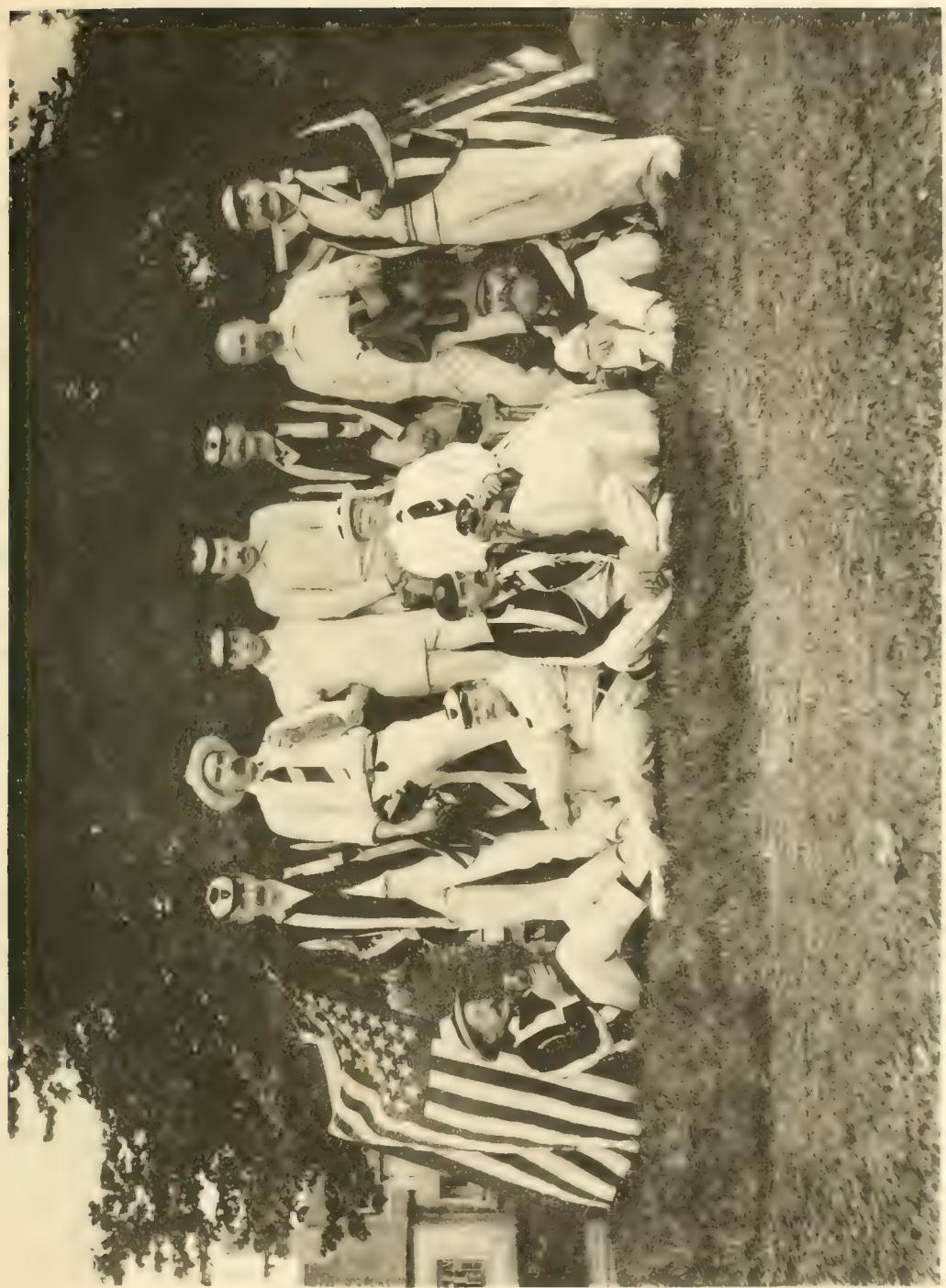
## THE ELEVEN CLERGYMEN

There is no evidence that McKim played in any of the cricket matches that were now due, although his host had particularly desired it. Thus, to Mr. Swinstead: "I wish you'd ask C. F. McKim to play on the 1st. . . . He is an old member of the Philadelphia C.C. and was first base on the Harvard nine when he was an undergrad. He has about the same amount of hair that Blomfield has—but I should think would hit hard. He used to." Perhaps the new Gold Medallist was fortunate in not playing, for the Artists had a terrible experience. The match was at Stanmore Park, on July 1st, against an Eleven of Clergymen, who hit up 329 for nine wickets against the Artists' 113. Among the clerks in Holy Orders was that despair of bowlers, the Rev. F. Meyrick Jones, the quickest-footed batsman that ever ran out to meet the ball.

But for Abbey's innings the Artists would have made only 111.

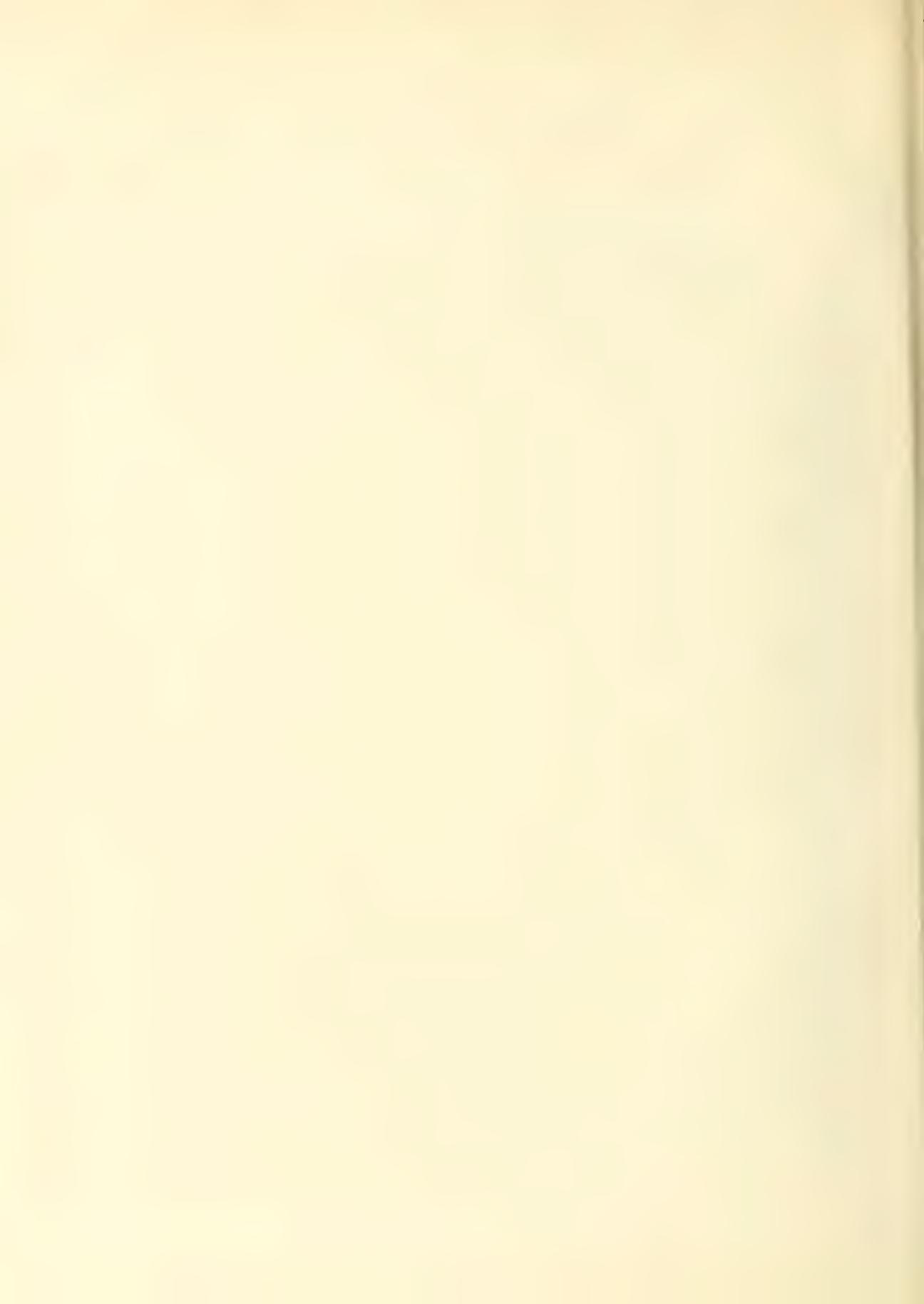
The other matches this season before the Fairford "week" were against the Benson Athletic Club in May, among the actors being Sir Frank Benson and the late Stephen Phillips. Abbey played also in a match at Esher against an Eleven of Authors brought together by Sir J. M. Barrie (who on this rare occasion reached double figures). The Fairford week matches were four in number. The first was against Mr. E. Bowley's Eleven and was won—Walter James making 26, R. Blomfield 35, H. J. Ford 20, and A. H. Studd 39 not out. The next was against Mr. R. Dimsdale's Eleven and was lost. The third was against Mr. T. Cripps's Eleven and was lost, Mr. C. O. H. Sewell, the Gloucestershire amateur, being among the winners with 68 to his name. But the fourth, against those old enemies of the Artists, the Wilts Wanderers, was gloriously won, thanks to not out innings by G. H. Swinstead, 101, and Henry Ford, 64.

On July 17th Whistler died. Abbey, who was one of his pall-bearers, wrote thus to Walter James: "Poor old Whistler's death has come finally as a shock. Somehow I thought to see him among us for a long time still. Few men have made so great a mark upon their time and few men have left their work so complete. He taught men to see something very subtle that *he* saw. He painted completely what he wished to show them, and left no loose ends behind him



July 4th Parade

Waukegan High School Band  
Waukegan, Illinois



## THE DEATH OF WHISTLER

for others to perfect. I think very few artists have done that. Some have—but mighty few."

Whistler in his last years, and especially after he came again to live in Chelsea, was much at Chelsea Lodge, dining there frequently and very often spending nearly the whole of Sunday there. Coming in the morning, he would return to the studio after lunch, where, sitting in a comfortable chair, in course of time he would fall asleep, and, after a nap, awakened, perhaps, by the arrival of guests and tea, would linger on until dinner, which a little persuasion induced him to share. During the months spent in London, Abbey saw as much as possible of his friends and acquaintances, and Whistler came not only to formal dinners, but often to impromptu dinners arranged for American friends passing unexpectedly through London. On one of these occasions, when Mark Twain was present, the party sat talking in the studio till dawn.

From a long letter in August to a friend, who wondered if it might not be his duty to exchange the pursuit of art for a political career, a few interesting passages are quoted. "For many years," Abbey writes, "I have been trying to settle (for myself) what particular combination of circumstances it is that makes a man an artist. Of course, he must be born one, and, curiously, he is—more often than not—born in circumstances and surroundings calculated, one would think, to develop anything but an artistic bent—that is, he comes oftener than not from plain, prosy and often poor middle-class people. I don't know whether a talent born in a higher sphere of life is less recognised—whether a boy of the upper classes is seriously discouraged from following with all his energies a profession which is rather more exciting than any other. I have at times thought that this might be the case. At any rate few of the artists whom I know who are of what is called the upper class seem prepared to go in for the thing for all it is worth—to go at it night and day for all there is in it. And in this particular profession sacrifices of all sorts of things—people, time, inclination and duties of other sorts and kinds, must give way if any satisfaction, any 'fun' that is, is to be got out of it....

## ART AND STATESMANSHIP

"It seems to me that when an artist has had a refined upbringing, he has, as a rule, been able to superimpose the study of art upon a foundation that carries him much farther than that man gets who has not. There are notorious instances to the contrary, I know, and it may be that men, like Turner and Morland, say, have inclined those who don't know much about it to take the view I speak of. . . . You have given us an inkling of what we might expect if you were to put your back into it—and, too, I believe you would have a great personal influence in the world of art and in art matters generally—and if you are ambitious in that way (as you are not, I should say) when the time comes—you can be of enormous use to the country in the Upper House. There are barristers and financiers and agriculturists and brewers by the dozen in that House, but not one man who speaks with any authority upon matters of taste and of art. And the better artist you are, the greater weight your words and opinions will have. And as the date of your succession in the course of things is, I am very glad to think, remote—you have lots of time before you, and if you really care to, can go a long way still—but if you stick at it you *must* do it better. You must go deeper, you must seek the advice of those whose work is sympathetic, and who are able to give you scientific criticism and advice—René Menard for instance—and men of that stamp. Go for the top ones. Poor Corbet was rather older than you are before he began to paint good landscapes. On the other hand, if you don't feel this thing driving within you—if the Parliamentary life has allurements—you had better not play at this. I, of course, don't know anything of the requirements owners of estates must possess. It may be that they work harder over their management than I have been able to perceive. It strikes me that the great majority of owners have a good deal of time for play, and leave a good deal of the duty of looking after their property to agents—some don't of course.

"I hope I haven't said too much—but remember that I am always ready to say more, if you care about it. I have had all this in my mind for days, and have written a page or two at a time—so, although this letter may be incoherent, it isn't thoughtless. . . .

KING RICHARD III AND THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

KING RICHARD : " THOU TROUBLEST ME ; I AM NOT IN THE VEIN."

WATER-COLOUR, DONE FOR REPRODUCTION IN COLOUR.

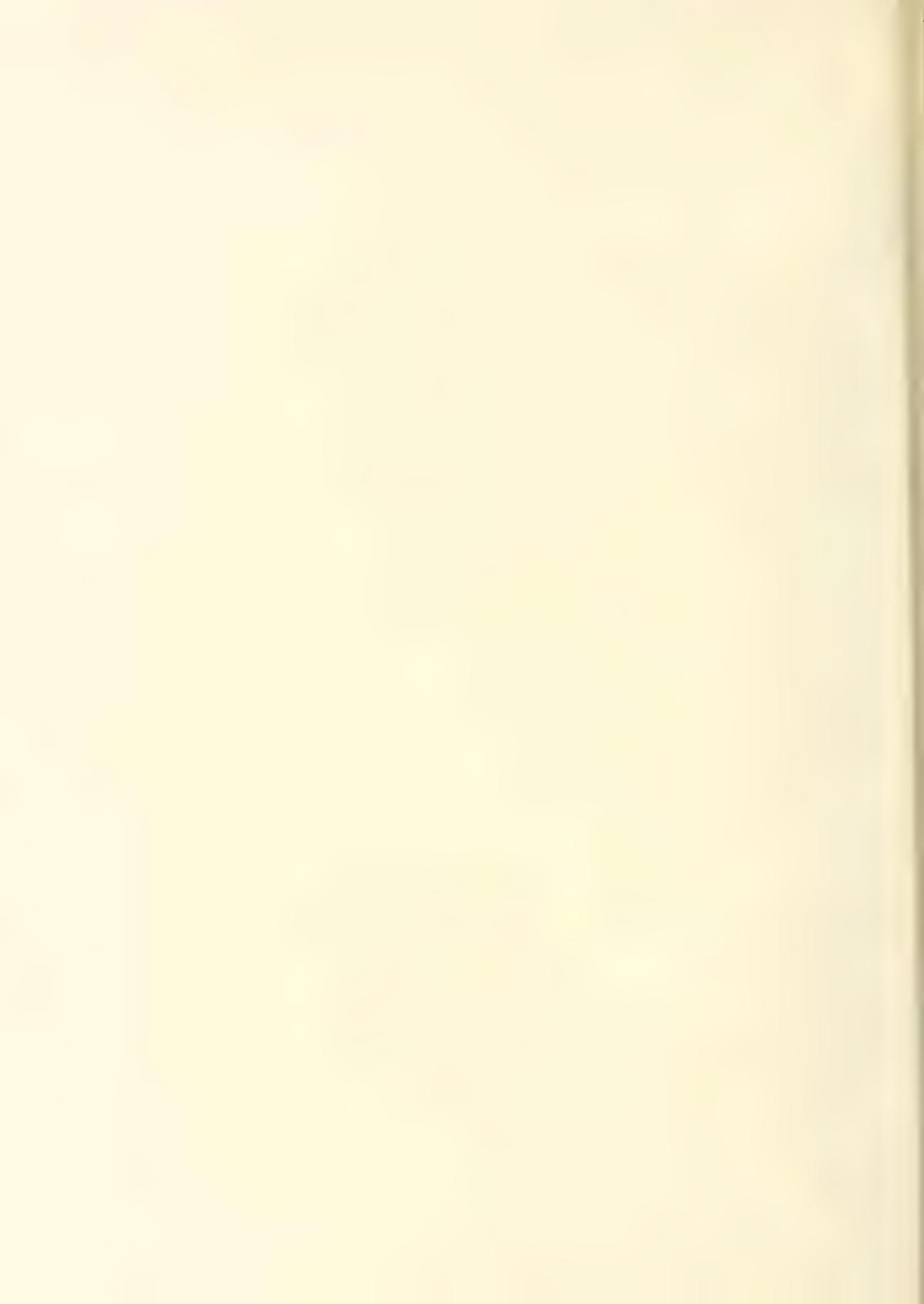
Twenty-two and a half inches by seventeen and a half inches.

1903.

" KING RICHARD III," ACT IV, SCENE II.







KING LEWIS XI OF FRANCE AND THE EARL OF WARWICK.

KING LEWIS: "NOW, WARWICK, TELL ME, EVEN UPON THY CONSCIENCE,  
IS EDWARD YOUR TRUE KING?"

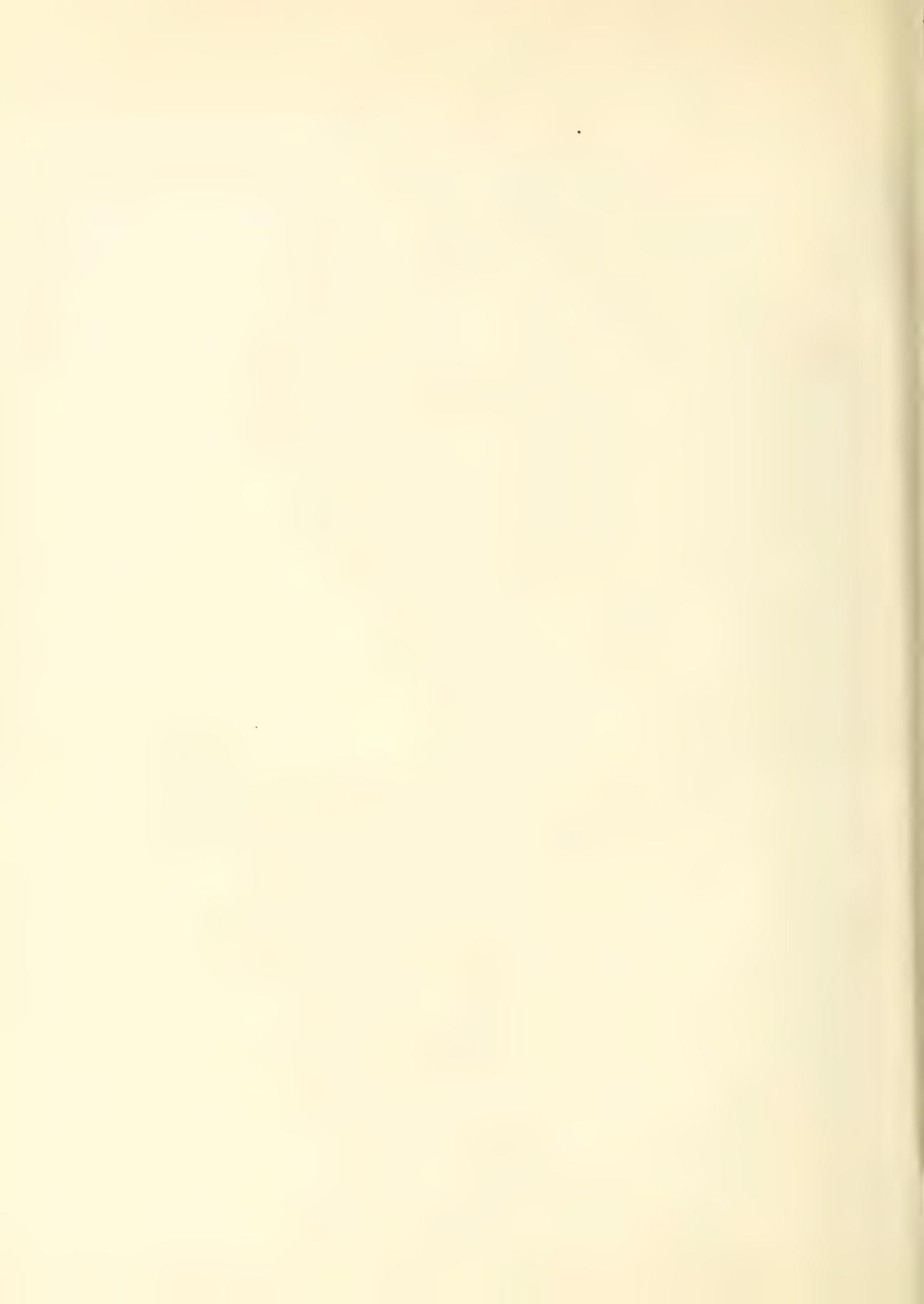
'Twenty-two and a half inches by eighteen and a quarter inches.

1903.

"KING HENRY VI," PART III, ACT III, SCENE III.







KING HENRY VI AND RICHARD DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

GLOSTER : " DOWN, DOWN TO HELL ; AND SAY I SENT THEE THITHER ! "

OIL, DONE FOR REPRODUCTION IN COLOUR.

Three feet by two feet.

1903.

" KING HENRY VI," PART III, ACT V, SCENE VI.







## A VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE

"The pups are flourishing. The raw sienna one is a very greedy little dog, and eats most scandalous. He has had to have castor oil—most of it got outside instead of in, but it seems to have cheered him up. The black and tan one has developed a curious habit of standing on his forelegs and waving his hind ones in the air while drinking. Is this right?"

A letter to Dr. White in September gives news of another member of the household, from whose head Dr. White had removed a little feline growth: "Tinker seems in his usual health and spirits. He was always a thoughtful cat, much given to communing alone with nature, both animal and vegetable—so it isn't easy to tell just how he feels. He's so black, too."

Again to Walter James, on September 25th: "I've been very busy making dozens of drawings for Board to enlarge for me . . . doing again the picture of the Dance which I never could get right in line. This is the third go at it, and it looks all right this time." And to the same correspondent on December 6th: "We took a trip to Cambridge, incidentally visiting Bletchley, where the bookstall is not all that it should be at such a popular resort. We saw the Greek play, and laughed in the right places, *I think*. We stayed with the Asshetons, and they were charming to us. Assheton biologises, and we saw many slices of the beginnings of things (people and what not) through his microscope. If you take an egg from under a hen after she has been sitting on it two days, peel off part of the shell, put it in warm water and salt, you can see its heart beat—if the hen will let you take the egg. Saw it myself.

"We went to Trinity Chapel on Sunday afternoon—after having tea at Waldstein's and Marcus Dimsdale's, and heard a chap sing 'Comfort ye' most awful well. It is good to hear four or five hundred undergrads roar hymns, and I could not but think they might be given more than one hymn to roar. I also thought the effect of the whole thing would be enhanced if they washed their surplices often. Well, Assheton and I dined at Trinity—very well, I thought—the two high tables crammed, a lot of folks being up for the play. I sat next a cheery mathematician named Forsyth. We had much ex-

## THE ACADEMY'S CRITICS

cellent port in the combination room—and so home to bed rather merry by ten o'clock. Next day we lunched with the Darwins and sightsaw variously, and met many dons and dons' wives at dinner in the evening."

The letter continues, apropos of the critics who had been revelling in one of the periodical attacks on the R.A. "I often think how much better employed some of these chaps would be if they were to try to overcome their own shortcomings instead of pointing out the shortcomings of others. This is an ancient thought, but I often think it.... The poor old R.A. is a very easy mark, but I can't help thinking it would be well to have a better thing to put in its place before they knock it *all* to pieces. They are rather silent upon this point, and, seriously, I think they have done a great deal of damage to art as such—with a big A or a little one. The public does not discriminate, and no good was ever done one thing by abusing another. As to the Chantrey—a committee of angels would not select pictures to please everybody. I don't care for nine-tenths of the pictures they buy, nor would I care for any large proportion that anybody else would buy—any committee, that is. To suggest that we are dishonest is, however, well worthy the people who say so."

Writing to Mr. Swinstead in the spring Abbey had complained of feeling old (he was fifty-one in April), and again in a letter to Dr. White in September he had said: "I get much more tired than I used to, I think—and it is more of an effort to keep up to concert pitch"—signs that the strain of the intense and constant mental and bodily energy and purpose of the painter was beginning to tell. He says as much in a letter to his brother-in-law on December 8th. "I am very hard at it and feel the strain of it nowadays—so many things that ought to be finished and can't get finished, somehow, although I work until six o'clock most nights—and am always at it by 9.30.... I am sure that at this game physical strength goes a long way."

An unfinished and unposted letter to his brother, written on the following day and found among Abbey's papers, tells more. "I have had a laborious year of it—and feel the fag of it rather. I am more and more convinced that great physical strength is absolutely es-

MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, LORDS AND LADIES.

MACBETH: "THERE'S BLOOD UPON THY FACE."

MURDERER: "'TIS BANQUO'S THEN."

Two feet four inches by one foot nine inches.

1903.

"MACBETH," ACT III, SCENE IV.







MACBETH AND THE THREE WITCHES.

APPARITION : " MACBETH ! MACBETH ! MACBETH ! BEWARE MACDUFF ! "

Twenty-two and a half inches by eighteen inches.

1903.

" MACBETH," ACT IV, SCENE I.







## ART AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH

sential to any success in art. Those who get anywhere at all—who don't fall by the way—I have noticed that this gift is theirs. Hard and incessant study, combined with a particularly nerve-trying sort of labour—unless one is very strong one can't stand it. I am not speaking of idlers—men who play at it—but workers, like Sargent, for instance, who has had to ease up. I've met nearly all the great artists of my time and many of the lesser ones—but the big ones are always strong men. Women who stick at it *always* become wrecks—I have never known it otherwise. In other arts one can sit comfortably and dictate—or, as in music, interpret what others, who don't execute, have written, or act what others contrive. At *this* game you are using every faculty you have at once—mind and nerves and body."—This phase of weariness through which the artist was passing was, however, only temporary. He completely recovered his strength and buoyancy.

The letter to William Abbey goes on to sum up the year's work: "I have nearly finished the Coronation, glory be!—and am well on with Harrisburg and Dr. Morgan's reredos—also a picture ["A Measure"] now on its third canvas for Mr. Taylor in New York. I suppose I can't call the months of labour spent on the other two canvases lost, for I learned something. I've done a good many Shakespeare drawings, but these big nude figures in action take it out of me"—a reference to the studies for one of the Harrisburg lunettes. "I get hungry sometimes for people to talk to—I read so much (we read so much) that sometimes one wants to argue about it with somebody. I sometimes have regretted that I didn't go to the University at home. Of course it would, in a sense, have stiffened my hand—I often see the lack of early hand training in the work of artists who have been university men. One must acquire ease in moving early. Hard reading helps one later—but science is hard to get unless one has a learned man over one early.... Now that I have young men under me I do my best to keep 'em hard at science. I can't bother with more than one helper at a time—and take only those who have had as thorough a training as schools can give them.... I like to visit about once a year—for two days. I can't idle about and I hate to

## GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN MEDALS

shoot or fish—and loathe cards—and that's about all there is to it. Bridge whist is the nuisance of the age. Cards always are, to me."

In *Harper's* in 1903 Abbey was represented by his drawings to *Richard II.*, *King John*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. In July he had received through Lord Lansdowne a gold medal for Art conferred upon him by the Kaiser in recognition of his work at the Berlin Exhibition, where his "Hamlet" painting had been hung. It has since been melted down, together with those from Vienna and Munich, for the Red Cross.

In 1904, in which the usual cricket week was found to be impracticable, there is no letter until May, by which time "A Measure" and the central panel of the reredos for the American Church in Paris were on view in the Royal Academy. Upon "A Measure" this note from Stanford White has some bearing: "Charlie [Mc Kim] says that you have done some wonderful things for Taylor's house, and I am dying to see them. I think, however, that it will be hard for you to do anything much finer than the beautiful panel you did for Whitelaw Reid. Every time I see it I fall more and more in love with it. By the way, if I could get the Hon. Whitelaw to consent and pay for it (as I suppose it will cost like thunder), would you let me have a little manufactory of tapestries, which has been started here, try to reproduce it on tapestry?" The project, however, did not materialise, and Stanford White's tragic end occurred not long after. He had been a remarkable influence in artistic life and his death meant a great loss to American architecture.

It is now time to say something more definite of the nature of the new task on which Abbey was to be chiefly occupied for the remaining years of his life—the decorations for the State Capitol at Harrisburg, in Pennsylvania. In this building there is a grand staircase which rises from the ground to the top floor and is surmounted by a dome. The architect's first proposition to Abbey was that he should make mural paintings for the collar of this dome and also for the House of Representatives, for the Senate and for the Supreme Court, all of which chambers gave upon the different floors of the staircase: but upon going further into this matter, the archi-

STUDY FOR "A MEASURE."

"A Measure" is referred to on page 399 as "The Dance."

1897-1904.







## THE HARRISBURG CAPITOL

tect found that the funds at his disposal were insufficient to carry out the full scheme immediately, and accordingly Abbey was asked to make the paintings for the dome only.

It had been Abbey's original intention to enshrine in the dome the various religious sects—(for Pennsylvania was the refuge for all persecuted sectaries, and here were Mennonites, Dunkers, Schwenkfelders, Moravians and many others)—and to reserve the designs of the Pennsylvanian industries for one of the State Chambers, but believing that his work was to be limited to the dome, and fearing that there would be no other opportunity to depict the State industries, he began at once upon the designs for oil, steel, mines, etc., which are now in the dome—four lunettes, each 38 feet by 22 feet, and four circular paintings, each 14 feet in diameter, for the pendentives—and when, in 1904, the Governor of Pennsylvania signed the contract for the remainder of the decorative scheme, the lunettes were too far advanced to make possible any change in these designs.

The further spaces settled upon for the House of Representatives were of the following dimensions:—35 feet square over the rostrum; on either side of this—on the same wall—a space 12 feet wide by 24 feet high; at the other end of the room, opposite the rostrum, some further spaces, which, however, were not done; and, in the middle of the ceiling, a circular space 24 feet in diameter; in the Senate Chamber a frieze 60 to 80 feet long by 9 feet high, and certain smaller spaces on the wall opposite. With the exception, however, of the "Valley Forge" for one of these smaller spaces Abbey did not live to complete any paintings for either the Senate or for the Supreme Court.

There were difficulties to be overcome before the artist succeeded in gaining the free hand which to him was an absolute necessity. In one case a set of plans had been sent to him for the House of Representatives showing two rows of small spaces for small designs, to fill the great space, 35 feet square, over the rostrum, where the "Apotheosis of Pennsylvania" now hangs triumphant, and also to fill the spaces for "Penn's Treaty" and the "Reading of the Declaration,"

## INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

which are now on either side of it. These rows of designs were separated from each other by mouldings nearly two feet wide, for, as the artist was to be paid according to the size of his painting, the price for painting these big spaces would be much reduced if part of it was covered with wide mouldings. Abbey refused to paint a wall of easel pictures, but offered to do for love the extra space which the removal of the mouldings would give him, and thus the matter was settled. The mouldings were finally removed and the spaces given up to the three single designs. When certain authorities wished to interfere in the choice of subjects he insisted that the choice must be left to him, and when others tried to confine him to depicting the history of Pennsylvania, to the exclusion of allegorical subjects, he would agree only when the space to be filled lent itself in his opinion to a realistic subject, but in no case where an abstract subject was absolutely needed.

It will be seen that the artist was taking upon his shoulders a gigantic burden of responsibility, which was not lessened by certain vacillations among the authorities leading to much correspondence and numerous modifications. Only by stipulating for a free hand and eventually getting it could Abbey have done so much towards the completion of the work as he did. For example, we find him writing, in November, 1904, "I note what you say about 'allegories'—but there are certain spaces where realistic subjects are absolutely out of place and abstract subjects are as absolutely needed. It is far easier to do realistic things than abstractions or allegories—that is, for me—but I should decline to paint realistic subjects for spaces where they are inappropriate. This colour scheme is a most difficult job, but I have got it nearly finished. . . . I dare say it is difficult to make the powers that be understand that designing decorations for several rooms is a very different problem from merely painting a series of pictures having no colour or line relation to each other—and that an enormous deal of arranging has to be undertaken before a satisfactory arrangement can be come at. However, I try not to worry about it, but I do worry a good deal, and I am longing to get it settled one way or the other so that my path ahead will be plain."

## THE “CORONATION” EXHIBITED

Here, for the present, we may leave the Harrisburg commission, remembering, as we proceed, that it was now and henceforward the artist's dominating occupation. Meanwhile the picture of the Coronation was completed, and at the end of October, 1904, was exhibited at the Hanover Gallery by Messrs. Agnew, who had received permission from the King to reproduce it; and after they had exhibited it in London and in various provincial towns and it had been etched for them by Laguillermie, it was hung in Buckingham Palace, where it now is. A reproduction is given in this volume, but so large and crowded a canvas must be seen to be rightly understood and appreciated.

Earlier in this year (1904) Abbey had been invited to become the first President of the newly established Bath Society of Artists and had accepted. In spite of his many engagements he prepared a little speech for the opening of the Society's first Exhibition, and on November 16th, he delivered it. His few remarks were typical of his good sense and kindness. “In these days of centralisation,” he said, “when, indeed, the inhabitants of a town point with pride to the facilities that are afforded to those who wish to get elsewhere as quickly as possible, it requires no little courage on the part of those of its citizens who practise the profession of painting to organise themselves and engage a gallery in which to hold an exhibition. Centralisation has the effect of drawing away to larger towns those who wish to associate with a greater number of others practising the same art or profession, to learn of them, to be in the movement. This is natural, but it does not always follow that they should be forgotten by those they leave behind. . . . In the great days of art (and I am not sure they were not great because the artist was given the opportunity to be great) the artists of a town were almost its most cherished citizens. It was to the artist that rich merchants and manufacturers—the Medici, the Strozzi, the Borgias—looked to make themselves, their houses, and their cities magnificent. The Church was, of course, dependent upon the artist to assist in diverting the thoughts of its votaries from material things, and I need not enlarge upon the way in which these artists, these architects, sculptors, and painters rose to

## A PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

the occasion, for their work—or much of it—lives to speak for them. The more intimate histories of those days—the lives of Michael Angelo, of Raphael, of Benvenuto Cellini, and many more—are full of tales of the rivalry of Popes and Kings and rich citizens for the possession of the services of these artists....

“This Exhibition will, we hope, draw the attention of the people of Bath to the efforts of its young artists and by timely encouragement help them in what—if it is pursued seriously—is a very arduous profession. . . . It is not to be expected that those who are willing and able to help forward youthful talent will have sufficient expert knowledge to foresee promise of future distinction in the tentative efforts of the young men of Bath and its neighbourhood, who send their pictures here, but they can be advised by those who have this knowledge and experience, and I may say that I have from time to time had the privilege of drawing the attention of men of taste and means to the work of young artists. In more than one instance a timely commission has been the means of starting a career which might otherwise have waited a long time for its opening opportunity.”

Not only was the Coronation now behind him but Abbey had also delivered the Royal Exchange panel, which was unveiled on December 19th, 1904, by the Lady Mayoress. The painting represents the two masters—of the Merchant Taylors’ and the Skinners’ Companies, by which it was presented to the Royal Exchange—pledging themselves in their new-found amity at the foot of the Chair of State of the Lord Mayor—the event marking the end of their long feud, in 1484.

Concerning Abbey’s conception of Iago in the Tragedies in *Harper’s* Sir Frank Benson wrote: “I hope you will not think me impertinent if I send you a line to express my thanks for the great pleasure I have derived from seeing your wonderful picture of Iago in *Harper’s Magazine*. It is the best illustration I have ever seen of the Borgia chapters of Italian history. I would like to ask his genesis when I next meet you.”

## CHAPTER XXXIX

# COLUMBUS, ST. GAUDENS AND A BREAKDOWN

1905-1906 Aged 52-54

The Tyneside Ironworkers—A Flamingo—Napier Hemy on Columbus—Hay's Last Letter—The Academy of Arts and Letters—A Search for a Motto—St. Gaudens as a Correspondent—An Act of Reparation—The Salmagundi Mug—Henry James as Counsellor—Enforced Rest and Travel

THE first letter in January tells of a visit to the North to make studies of ironworkers in the Tyneside industries for the Harrisburg lunette typifying "The Spirit of Vulcan"—facilities being arranged by Lord Northbourne, with whose son and daughter-in-law, Mr. Robert and Lady Evelyn James, Abbey and his wife stayed at Richmond. On his return he took up, for variety, an old theme on which he had begun to work as long ago as 1892—"Columbus in the New World." It will be seen from the photogravure that a company of flamingoes fly across the background, and in order to make studies of these birds we find the painter borrowing a flamingo skin, through Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, from the Natural History Museum. Not only was the flamingo necessary, but there had to be a good typical Columbus too, and some trustworthy Spanish ships. The model for the Columbus was none other than a modern navigator of eminence, the marine painter and Abbey's friend and fellow Academician, the late C. Napier Hemy.

This was Abbey's invitation: "I have a very decided idea that you would be a fine Christopher Columbus! It seems to me you are cut out for the part. I know how retiring and modest you are, but I beg that you will put all personal diffidence aside and get me a photograph of yourself in the position roughly indicated overleaf. I enclose a velvet cap to be done in. You will see which way up it goes by the grease paint. It was Irving's, and he used to wear it in *Louis XI*. I should be immensely indebted to you if you will do me this favour."

## NAUTICAL PROBLEMS

Mr. Hemy having agreed, there came the question of the ships—but here is an amusing letter from the latter-day Columbus on this topic. It must first be explained that after searching near and far for the true types of vessel until he was satisfied, Abbey set his assistant Mr. Simmonds to the task of making models of them out of wood, cardboard, plasticine, and string. When finished they were photographed and copies sent to Mr. Hemy, as one who knew more about ships, shipping and the sea than any one, Mr. Joseph Conrad not excepted.

Abbey wrote: “I enclose a photo of the fleet—with some trepidation. You will probably tell me that I have got the Topping-loft jib staysail mixed up with the appendicitis halyards.... The photo is clear if you look at it with a magnifying glass. I am a little vague about the stern arrangements. The fleet is supposed to be lying at anchor—C.C. having just landed.... The figures are just under life size. The canvas is 10 feet by 7 feet 3 inches. Are the sails tied up right? The ships are yellow with red lines.”

“I’ve two other little things but I shall not send them in: they are each 37 feet by 22 feet.”

Mr. Hemy’s reply records his reception of the unfortunate argosy, which was, of course, promptly overhauled and refound.

“Churchfield, Falmouth,

“March 12th, 1905.

“DEAR ABBEY,

“The original C.C. was sent across the pond in a queer lot of ships, but the ramshackle freaks his humble understudy has been given by you are impossible. I protest! I never could have got over in them. The fact that you are painting me landing in my store clothes—my Sunday best—won’t make up for that shabby fleet. Old Baron Leys used to get a model, and paint him in his own modern clothes and then with great skill get rid of his modern look and work in the old style (always wrong). Now the way I think to do your ships is to get some good-natured sea painter to lend you a study or two of a modern ship done from nature—at anchor in a sunny sea. The sun and the sea and the sky are the same as in 1492. And the ship is a

## C. NAPIER HEMY

ship. The tomfoolery the old chaps put about their ships can be stuck on *after* you have got the sky, sea and ship. Am I right? Yes! it is a pity we are so far apart, have you not a motor that travels a hundred miles an hour? By the way that cap makes me look very old. Looking at my face it is a clear tan and that sketch I sent you is wrong. There is no hurry for the photos for a week or so, only send 'em all back except the three taken for you. Can you not get some photographs of the ships which were rebuilt in 1892—that engraving in *Harper's* is from a photo of the very ship. Are not the photos of my model fine? . . . It belonged to Nelson, and has a splendid old case. Some one, Mark Twain, said it was a wonderful thing the discovery of America by C.C., but it would have been much more wonderful if he had not discovered it. It would have been much more wonderful than ever had he got across with your fleet. After this parting insult to it I will shut up.

"Yours ever,

"C.N.H.

"Send for the studies of ships if you want them."

"This criticism," says Mr. Simmonds, "provided a joke against me for the rest of my stay at Fairford, I having made the models."

A letter to Dr. White in March suggests, and for the first time, that Abbey's swift direct methods were at variance with the somewhat leisurely processes of Philadelphia. Delays in correspondence about Harrisburg were continual. "I'm tied here," he says, "sadly in need of fresh protoplasm (you will find this word in the *Century Dic.*) . . . You should have seen the hounds stream through here on Saturday. The fox swam the river and went across the park like a streak. Isaac (the horse) and the cows took a hand—but didn't go far. Well, I think I have told you pretty well all the news. I've been made hon. mem. of the British Architects and elected to the Soc. of Antiquaries, otherwise life has been uneventful. A cow is to calve shortly—will wire result."

On May 5th Abbey was at the farewell banquet to Mr. Choate, the retiring U.S. Ambassador, to be succeeded by Mr. Whitelaw Reid. On the 22nd he wrote to Mr. Choate's predecessor, John Hay: "It is

## JOHN HAY

extraordinary, when one looks back over it, the amount you have accomplished in the last twenty years. . . . You have made a difference in the world's history since those days—and every American worthy of the name is glad you were born. I have from time to time had letters—in my head—to you, but they have not got themselves written. So many things seem to happen—so many catastrophes and matters that are really of moment—that the affairs of a hard-working artist and the news of his circle take on rather a colourless tint. And then, people die, during the past year or two the gaps have been many and irreparable, and one feels that one must cling to one's remaining friends with both hands." This letter was crossed by one from Hay, the last letter that his old friend, then an ailing man with serious heart weakness, was to write to him.

"Bad Nauheim,

"May 24th, 1905.

"MY DEAR ABBEY,

"Getting sick and dying is not nearly so serious a matter as it is to lose sight and touch of one's friends in the process. Your letter makes me ache to see you. By the same mail comes an invitation to Cambridge to receive a degree the week after I sail for home. *That* is past praying for, but I hope I may see you and Mrs. Abbey during the few hours we are to be in London. Our stay there is so short and my health so uncertain that we have declined thus far all our friends' invitations. Mrs. Hay or I will communicate further with you.

"I have nothing amusing to say about myself. The Doctor says I am better and that I may look for further improvement later on.

"Let me congratulate you on all your glories and successes, which have pleased me as much as if I had a share in them.

"Best wishes to Mrs. Abbey. "Yours affectionately,

"JOHN HAY."

News of a further American honour came in the same month when Abbey was informed that he had been elected a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters: being one of those elected at a meeting of the National Institution of Arts and Letters (from which

# THE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS

the Academy sprang) on May 13th, to bring the members to the requisite number of thirty. The names of the thirty were: W. D. Howells, Augustus St. Gaudens, Edmund C. Stedman, John La Farge, Samuel L. Clemens, John Hay, Edward MacDowell, Henry James, Charles F. McKim, Henry Adams, Charles Eliot Norton, J. Q. A. Ward, Thomas R. Lounsbury, Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Joseph Jefferson, J. S. Sargent, R. W. Gilder, Horace H. Furness, John Bigelow, Winslow Homer, Carl Schurz, Alfred T. Mahan, Joel Chandler Harris, William James, Daniel C. French, John Burroughs, James F. Rhodes, E. A. Abbey, Horatio Parker.

Abbey had had a little cricket in London in the spring, the first match being between two teams of Artists, when his score is thus registered:

Abbey 111 (464213, these last not scored), c. La Thangue,

b. Chowne .. .. .. .. .. .. .. 3

Against the Royal Academy students he made 2 not out; and another 2 not out against Sir F. R. Benson's Eleven; but against a team of victorious authors at Esher he failed to score.

In June John Hay was in London for a few days, declining all invitations except to lunch with the Abbeys. After lunch he expressed the wish to see the work in the studio. He refused to be carried upstairs, but walked very slowly and obviously with some distress. Among the canvases, however, he became almost his old self again and was interested in all—the Columbus, the Harrisburg decorations, the reredos, and the more recent drawings for the Tragedies. Abbey never saw him again : he died aged sixty-six.

The Fairford Week was in August, beginning with a very close match against Mr. E. T. Cripps's Eleven which Abbey's side won by four runs, 214 to 210. H. J. Ford and L. C. Nightingale were top scorers with 44 and 40. In the return match Mr. Cripps's Eleven won. The next was a smashing victory over Mr. R. Dimsdale's side: H. J. Ford 32, G. H. Swinstead 38, K. T. M. Teesdale 29, and Gerard Chowne (who was killed in the War) 37. In this match William Abbey, on a visit from America, played and made 1, a score just equalled by his brother. The final match was against the Rev. C. M.

## A MEDALLION PORTRAIT

R. Luckman's Eleven, and in spite of 49 by H. J. Ford and 49 not out by George Gascoyne, was lost. This, had they known it, was the last Fairford cricket week.

In June of this year Mr. G. W. Stewart, the architect of the Candler Building in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., had written to Abbey, stating that a series of medallions was intended for the façade of that structure, each to commemorate an art, science, craft, profession or trade, with a relief portrait of one of the most illustrious exponents in the middle. He requested Abbey, as a chosen representative of painting, to send him a photograph in profile, and it was for this purpose that, during the progress of this last cricket week, Mr. Swinstead took the fine photograph which is here reproduced, with the shirt left open at the neck to assist the sculptor. Such, however, was Abbey's dislike of anything that seemed even to savour of affectation in artists that he would never allow this photograph to be seen, and it is now for the first time made public.

Writing to Walter James in September Abbey asks literally for local colour from Northumberland. "I wonder if you would do me a rough little sketch of the kind of ground coal grows in—or iron? I am ceasing to care greatly for the brown pasteboard landscape in my miners' lunette—and should like to do something different. It must have cracks, or the capacity of having cracks by which seven nude men may descend into the bowels of the earth, but I should like something simple, with a dash of green in it, not unlike the Free Foresters' blazer.... Me—I'm in trouble with my teeth. My rare and costly bridge work is coming to pieces (I call it in my humorous way my 'Ponte Molar'), and large sums will probably find their way into the pocket of the dentist... when he comes back from his holiday. Fancy a dentist needing a holiday, whose life must be a holiday! In the meantime I fondle the place with my tongue, much to the detriment of the latter....

"Don't bother much over the sketch. Perhaps you have such an one on hand already. Any old thing that will enable me to paint in summat that won't do violence to somebody's geological feelings.... I have a feeling that I've left out what I sat down to say.

E. A. ABBEY.

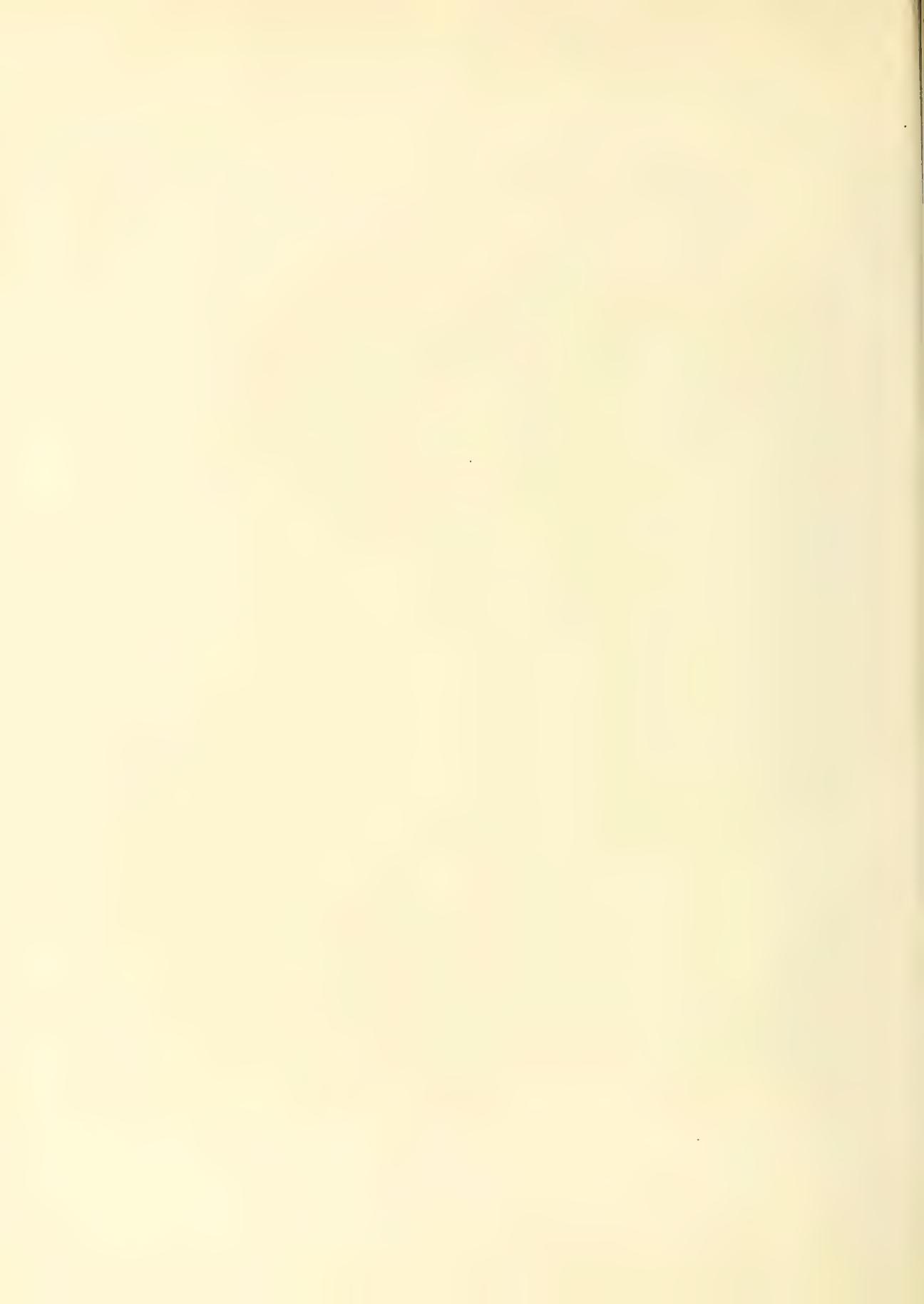
PHOTOGRAPHED DURING THE CRICKET WEEK AT MORGAN HALL, IN JUNE, 1905.

AGE FIFTY-THREE.

Now first published.







## AMERICA

If in the silent watches of the night—my teeth ceasing to occupy my mind—I should suddenly think of it, I will arise and write some more.”

Another letter to Dr. White, who had been ill: “Your card conveying the glad tidings of your recovery to normal form was received with the acclamation good news demanded. We had the church bells rung, and a bonfire made of all the spare pictures and sketches in the studio. Your news penetrated to Oxford, and I had a note from Osler to tell me the cheery fact. I hope your elbow has acquired renewed vigour and that you are now able to crook it as constantly as the size of your hat will allow. Also my very hearty thanks for sending me the *Outlook*. I am glad indeed to have it, and I trust its optimism is borne out by facts. I believe we [America] have a great future before us, and some of it behind us. The times we live in never seem to us, who are rubbing our noses up against them, so very great—except at times, such exceptional times, as those when the U. of P. downs Harvard 24 to 0.”

From a letter to Walter James, on December 14th, 1905: “I am constantly irritated by laudations of the Rokeby Venus. If nothing much had been said we might have enjoyed bits of it greatly—the legs and feet—but the rest is bosh: I don’t care who did it. Bad drawing and modelling, and the nice tone that is due solely to time. . . . We are rapidly approaching a period when we shall test the quality of a Greek coin by biting it. Intrinsic merit is more and more shoved into the background and coughed down. . . .

“The election business I could wish well over. It seems to me, with my limited lights, that the Liberals would have had a better chance if the Home Rule bogey hadn’t appeared—but I suppose it was bound to do so. But these elections lead people to abuse each other more than is needful—and it takes time, sometimes, for the abuse to get itself forgotten. . . .

“We are very much interested in Holman Hunt’s book. I suppose you’ve got it. It is a most interesting presentment of a personality. He reminds one a little of the boy who wouldn’t grow up—and has gone for years and years believing and thinking many things that

## HOLMAN HUNT

are not. But it is very interesting reading—and lots of it! Rossetti seems to have been a thorn in his flesh.

"I hope your show is going to be all right, as I am sure it would be if only people would get the time-stained bric-à-brac out of their eye. I think we should have a post-graduate course at the R.A. Schools. A course consisting of 'games,' of how to rub 'em down with yellow lake and varnish, and how to pour strong coffee over flesh and rub it in, etc., etc. There is no question but that the time-stained article looks best with one's curtains and furniture—and there you are...."

The first letter of 1906 is to Mr. (now Sir) Frederick M. Fry, who had been Master of the Merchant Taylors' Company when Abbey received the commission for the Royal Exchange panel, and in it we have news of a new toy which was to be the source of very great pleasure and recreation to its owner—a Daimler: "I have two youngsters helping me now, and you can hear the bristles rasping the canvas for a mile or less. . . . The motor has been behaving very well, thank you. It spends a deal of time sitting in its back room. It is no fun galumphing about in the mud, as St. Paul says (I forget where), and when new stones are on the road it is the deuce (I think St. Luke says this)."

A day later Abbey wrote to Dr. White: "I understand things come high in your beautiful country, and that opera supers can get more food for £2 in London than they can for £3 in New York. This is because they don't chew their cuds properly. I haven't seen anything from Fletcher [the food reformer] as to the effect of diet on the voice. People who spend most of their time chewing must perform record their emotions in writing—rather than in song or speech—and it is an interesting prospect opened up by the vision, some years hence, if things are allowed to go on, of a land where nothing is heard save sounds resembling a stable at feeding time—and rattle of motor cars."

"I am working very hard—and wish I weren't. I can't leave my work, and it would be better for us all if I could. I find that I must hammer out my ideas before they get chilled, or else other ideas take their place."

IN THE STREET LEADING TO THE CAPITOL.

CÆSAR : "THE IDES OF MARCH ARE COME."

SOOTHSAYER : "AYE, CÆSAR : BUT NOT GONE!"

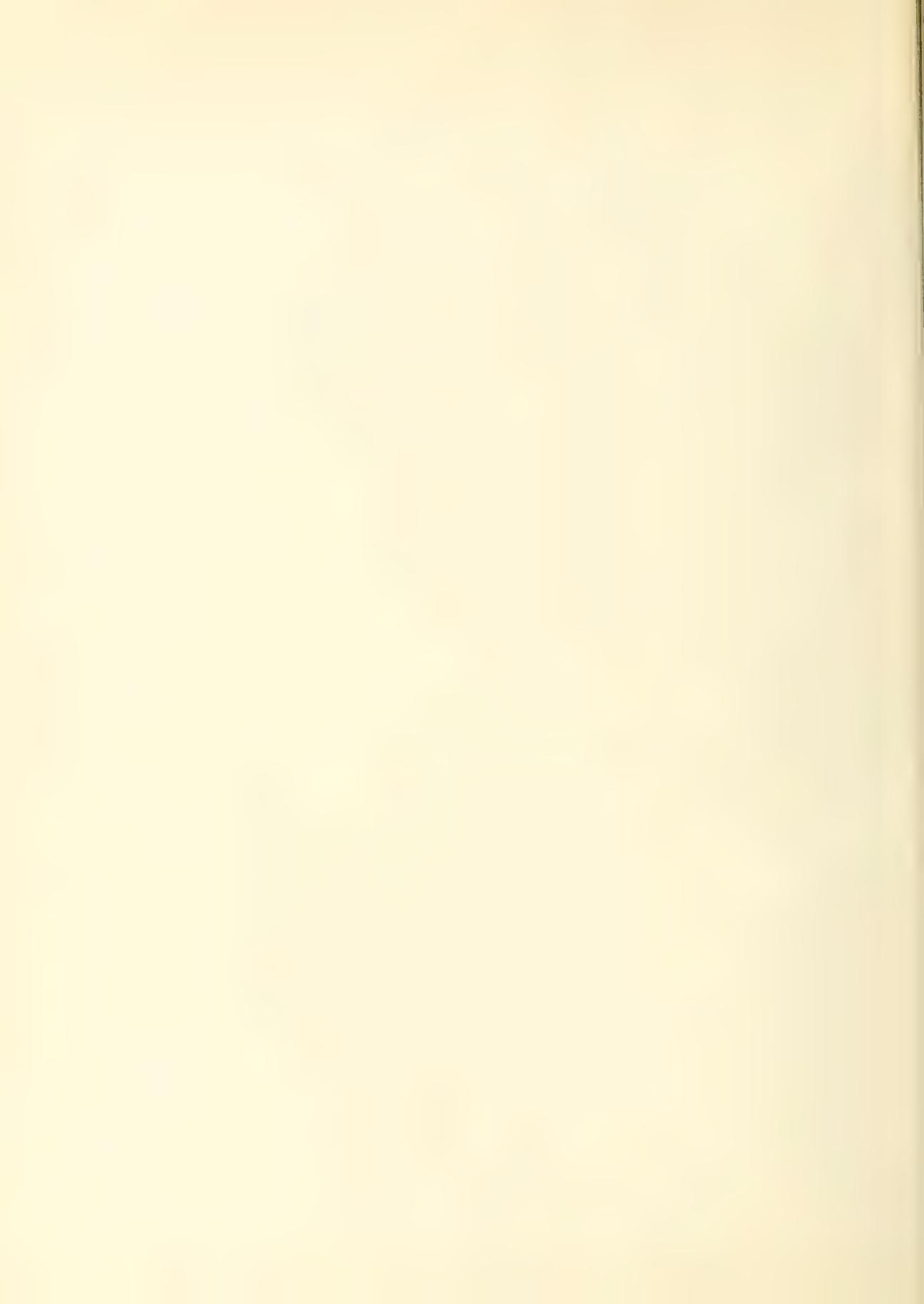
Twenty-two and a half inches by eighteen inches.

1905.

"JULIUS CÆSAR," ACT III, SCENE I.







## THE PENDENTIVES

On January 10th there is an interesting letter to Lord Northbourne concerning the Harrisburg decorations. "I believe the Members in the Upper House are at this moment enduring a period of enforced idleness, so that I am not hesitating to ask a favour of you—which is as follows: I am painting four large circular panels—with a figure in each—representing respectively 'Art,' 'Law,' 'Science,' and 'Religion.' I have found inscriptions—quotations—for three of these; but 'Art' sticks me up. I have applied to various authorities, and have ransacked my books, but I can't find anything that just fits.

The other three are:

"[For Law:] 'Justice is the end of Government. It is the end of Civil Society. It ever has been, and ever will be, pursued until it be obtained, or until Liberty be lost in the pursuit.' (Alexander Hamilton.)

"[For Religion:] 'For Religion, pure Religion, I say, standeth not in wearing of a Monk's Cowl, but in Justice, Righteousness and well-doing.' (Latimer.)

"[For Science:] 'I am What Is, What Hath Been, What Shall Be—My Veil hath been Disclosed by None. The Fruit which I have Brought Forth—is this—The Sun is Born.' (From a Temple of Isis in Egypt.)

"'Art' should be about as long as the first. Now if you happen to have some neat thing that would cover the ground—handy—I should be greatly obliged if you would let me have it. But don't *bother* about it—please! . . .

"My work gets increasingly onerous—and any leisure I may have nursed a hope of looking forward to is not to be thought of for a long, long time—if I should live a long, long time! . . ."

Lord Northbourne threw himself into the quest for the motto and found several, none of which, however, was quite suitable. Abbey's letter acknowledging his efforts contains an amusing passage on the recent election: "There is much indignation over the enthusiasm of a Liberal band at East Leach. They had been presented with a handsome set of instruments by their landlord—a strong fiscal reformer—and have been escorting the Liberal candidate about—serenad-

## THE ART MOTTO

ing him—and generally perverting the instruments confided to their care. We politely share the indignation this thoughtless behaviour has aroused, but we smile when we are not under observation.

"This country is far from being a democracy—yet, and I fear the enormous Labour vote, which will very soon begin to be made use of by improper people, as it is in America, will make a great deal of trouble in the future. It is not so easy to make responsible folk out of people who have nothing to lose—and the franchise is a big thing to entrust them with. . . ."

Meanwhile Henry James, who had also been searching for a motto, wrote thus on the progress of the chase: "You must positively (for the locality) have an English thing, and a very good and weighty, and if possible (though not imperatively?) *prose* thing, in spite of the fact that there is nothing the *greater* English writers have delivered themselves upon so little as Art. Look into Ruskin and he's all about Nature—splendidly often, but *loathing* Art. And I have been hunting Emerson this evening—with the consequent conviction that he hadn't a notion of what it is. Browning had, and there may be something in him, but he is in general fearfully unquotable, and was always speaking in some particular dramatic sense. I was haunted by the memory of something in Shakespeare, but find it's only the scrap out of *Winter's Tale* (Perdita):

. . . this is an art  
Which doth mend nature—change it rather;  
But the art itself is nature.

I think that would be excellent, almost, for any reference to the Art your depicted labours represent; but not for your figure and circle (besides being too short). You want something large and majestic, and not too philosophic. . . . I doubt if there *be* any at all grand English *definition*—there is only perhaps some sufficiently ample *image*. Your creature trampled upon—I don't know what he could better be than a small simulacrum of—.

"Here is, after all, a small thing out of Emerson's *Essays*—but I am omitting half a sentence that spoils it. 'Art is the need to create;

## HENRY JAMES

but in its essence immense and universal, it is impatient of working with lame or tied hands. Nothing less than the creation of men and nature is its end. . . . Should you think of it you must make the image in her hand, not a model of the Parthenon, but of a small and exquisite human (male) figure, and as form she ought to be 'trampling' on something that symbolises the Void and the Vague—or *standing on all plastic material!* (a ball of putty!) But give me a little more time, as I say."

In the end the motto was found in the library at Morgan Hall, whence the other three had come.

"Art Deals with Things Forever Incapable of Definition, and that Belong to Love, Beauty, Joy, and Worship, the Shapes, Powers, and Glory of which are forever Building, Unbuilding, and Re-building in Each Man's Soul and in the Soul of the Whole World." (Plotinus.)

Since we have seen the mottoes, the four figures may appropriately be seen too; but it must be borne in mind that they are in reality 9 feet in height, and the backgrounds were of gold with lettering in white.

St. Gaudens had just been elected an honorary member of the Royal Academy. This is Abbey's letter:

"DEAR OLD GANDERS,

"You will have heard by this time—and I hope will appropriately celebrate the event—that you have been made an H.R.A. in succession to Dubois, and that old Israels was elected to similar honours in succession to Menzel. Long may you wave to keep the chair warm, and once in a way send us a 'caster plast' of something from what the *Daily Telegraph* calls the 'land of your adoption.' I have a bad cold—or I should be brilliant and eloquent—but perhaps you feel with me that the most satisfying recognition is that which comes from your fellow workmen, those who know what you've done. All these fancy D.D.'s and LL.D.'s and M.V.O.'s and crosses and things (that accumulate long after you have ceased to care a damn about 'em—anyway) are very well—but it's the fellers that know. I dare say you don't know how few honorary members there have been of the old R.A. Frémiet was the last elected—to succeed Guillaume—and

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

Bonnat to succeed Gérôme. They show up at the annual banquets—and look nice.

"After all the obloquy and calumny and anathematisation (I forget how to spell that word, but I know what she means) that have been heaped upon the old Academy, it remains the only institution in the world—prosperous, self-respecting, and hard-working—entirely run by artists with no help from governments or millionaires or any outsider. The many bequests that have been made to it have been made by its own members, and the income derived from this source is considerable. Turner and Chantrey and Cousins and Cope and Leighton are a few of those who left large sums—and if ever I had a large sum I'd leave it to it, too. Brock is our leading agitator in your line at present—and he contrives to make meetings lively. He backed you—and Gilbert nominated you—some years ago....

"I am, personally, doing large smears for the dome of the Harrisburg Capitol. They take up a lot of room—and involve a lot of exercise. Various youths from the R.A. Schools—the best selected—are assisting to make the studio populous, and I am inclined to think at times that a small back room all to myself would be desirable if only as a rest cure....

"Tadema writes me that you must feel pleased at being elected without the aid of either J.S.S. or myself. J.S.S. is in the Holy Land. Has been there for months.

"Gertrude sends her love—so do I—and with renewed wishes for more power to your elbow,

"Here's to you,

"E.A. ABBEY."

St. Gaudens replied on February 8th, from Windsor, Vermont:

"YOU DEAR OLD THING,

"Your letter is at hand. It is a swell honour that the Royal Academy have done me, and one that I appreciate a very great deal, all the more for the surprise of it; but one of the nicest things about it was getting such a letter as you have taken the trouble to write me. I appreciate *that* too, old boy. At the same time, I feel almost ashamed when I think that I step into Dubois's shoes and that I

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

follow in the procession with such a lot of other swells. I don't know how these things make you feel, but they overpower me with a sense of humility and I feel like a fraud.

"Yes, as you say, the alphabets and crosses, etc., that are plastered on a feller's chest are not what counts so much, but when the feller who knows thinks well of your performance, that is good for the soul and cheery.

"Well, here's to you and the other chaps who have given me this lift.

"I am crazy to get over there, although I do not see that I can before next autumn. I shall make a desperate effort to be at the Royal Academy dinner, but no speeches, 'by God'! The thing you saw that I shot off at the Architects' dinner was squeezed out of me by 'Blarney Charles' [McKim] who goes around prodding us all in that direction, and for the general good we thus make fools of ourselves. The only revenge is that he has to make speeches too, and to see him perspire and rub his tail with one hand and his head with the other makes us willing to bear with him. He has been doing a lot of work, you know. We have got 700,000 dollars for the Roman School, this entirely through his rodent-like determination. He's 'gently obstinate,' is he? but what with his efforts there, his work on the enormous Penn. R.R. station in New York, and the struggle to complete a beautiful library for Pierpont Morgan in two years which should take ten, he gave out, and has had to stop for three months. We were nervous about him, but are now glad to see he is in harness again.

"You know I am up in the country and only go to the city occasionally or I should give you all the news, but I know little of what is going on outside my own shop here except that New York is getting to be more and more extraordinary and that it is now a New Jerusalem in all directions. [Here a drawing of Semitic profiles.] Nevertheless, although it's hell, it's interesting to go to for the life of the place.

"We stay here all winter, which is cheerful with the snow, skating, sleighing, sleigh bells, etc. I suppose the clear, cold skies would

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

make you scream, but it makes the soul cheerful to go out under it.

"Laffan I never see, Paton only once a year, and none of the other Tilers, alas!

"It is good to see your work in *Harper's* and its recollection of 10th Street is mightily pleasant.

"I have my ups and downs the same as everyone else and 'GRIN AND BEAR' has become my motto, particularly after that fire. That is the most stupid, inane, and idiotic thing that can occur to anybody. If it was done and over with, all right, but every day or so you recall something that has been destroyed. Well! so it goes.

"Tell me, am I to receive some notification from the Royal Academy? As yet none has come over the horizon, or don't they notify? In this event do I do anything about it? If so, what?

"I will send some of my things to the Royal Academy as you suggest, but the Rock Creek figure is out of the question; Adams is very sensitive about it and I would not dare approach him on the subject.

"It's charity to you that makes me put all this in type, for with advancing years my writing is such that no one but the wonderful secretary that I have can decipher what I have scrawled. *I can't.* Gussie joins me in love to you both and I am

comme toujours  
as ever yours  
sempre a te  
tra la la la  
tra la la la.

"AUGUSTUS S-G."

The foregoing requires a few notes. McKim's breakdown was never mastered, and he died in 1909. St. Gaudens's studio at Windsor, Vermont, U.S.A., had been destroyed by fire. The Rock Creek figure was that exquisite female one of Grief, "Nirvana" (sometimes called "Death" and the "Peace of God"), designed for the tomb of Mrs. Henry Adams in the Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington.

A further letter from Abbey may be inserted here, although its date is May 9th, 1906:

THE ROYAL ACADEMY  
“Chelsea Lodge, 42 Tite Street, S.W.,  
“May 9th, 1906.

“DEAR GANDERS,

“Everything has finally straightened out, Eaton tells me—and your diploma forwarded.

“We were much disappointed that you sent us nothing. Thornycroft, who ‘hung’ the sculpture, was sure you had sent, but it turned out not. The sculpcher is various (as it usually is!). There is a very beautiful statue by Tommy Brock of Gainsborough, and two rather good things by White, the 1903 gold-medal student, and there are a few good busts—but we can’t expect a whole show of masterpieces every year, any more than a goose can have a litter entirely composed of swans. I believe, however, that this latter *can* be managed!

“I am sending you the *Times* report of the banquet, which was remarkable chiefly for Kipling’s speech, and for the absence of Royalty, which usually turns out in force. They were all abroad save the Duke of Connaught. As you see, no artist speaks save the President. (His reference to you evoked warm cheers.) We are so crowded that we never ask artists who are not members—nor do we ask more than one reporter. I hope you will find it all interesting. There is nothing perfect, I am given to understand, in this vale of tears—but the old R.A. has had an honest career at any rate—and is the only body of artists with its own funds in its own building—taking no commission from sales—and having no money from anybody. I send you the last year’s report, which is strictly confidential, but I think you ought to know something about us. Tear it up when you’ve done with it. If it bores you—tear it up anyhow. Say, I’d like to see you. Write me one of these days when you happen to think of it.

“J. S. S. is very strong this year—but his health is a bit impaired by a month’s work on the Hanging Committee.

“Warmest regards to Mrs. St. G.

“Yours always,

“NED.

“A man sent me a large roll of pickshers of great Americans. You were among it, and I was on the point of cherishing it on this

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

account, when a bill came for 50 dols. (not cents) for it. I was forced to relinquish it.

"P.S.—I reopen this, which it seems has not reached you, to assure you of the continuance of my most distinguished consideration and to say that I see in the papers that you are to do a Jefferson stachu. If you want a coat and things for T.J. I can get these things for you comparatively easily here, and I know how difficult it is to get 'em over yonder. Twenty dolyers or so would fit you out—I make this sajesschin—with all diffidence—but I have seen some darn rotten eighteenth centuary clothes on stachues in N.Y. and elsewhere in the United States.

"Ever of thee,  
"E.A.A."

Here is St. Gaudens's reply:

"DEAR ABBEY,

"June 13th, 1906.

"Your letter of May 9th is in my illustrious hands. The enclosed is part of what I have just written Paton.

"I think you are the sweetest ducky in the world to have written me when I know what an infernal bore it is for you to write. If you had one of these machines it might be otherwise, for I am talking to you exactly as if you were standing here in front of me with your back to Ascutney mountain and your face in the flicker of the vine leaves which I have so poetically described to Paton. Don't be surprised if I am poetic a number of times again before I'm through.

"I see about your big success in the papers; I would give a good deal—I would give a peck of the sweet potatoes I used to hook and cook and eat in the streets when I was a boy—to have a look at your things to-day. Osler must think strange things of his theory when he sees what you've done and what I have been told Sargent has been doing of him. We are not dead yet, by Jingo, are we? If you were to see the establishment I have here you would not think I was, although I am stretched out on a couch at this moment in the flickering sunlight. I will stick at it until I am finally stretched out; that's the only thing after all—work, I mean—not being stretched out!

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

Are you as strong and stocky as ever, and do you play baseball in that field back of your house? I remember it well; also the garden and the sunset at the station when we left.

"The diploma is stuck up in my studio. What a gorgeous affair it is, and what with King Edward's name on it and the whole business, I feel quite dandy. I am really tremendously stuck-up by this thing.

"Thank you for the *Times* and for the Academy report. The latter, of course, I read with interest and destroyed, as you desired. I would have given a great deal to have been at that dinner; I am pretty sure I can be there next year; you see the Parnell is to be unveiled, I hope, next June (although it may be twenty Junes from now). Then I will have to go to Dublin to prepare things and that will bring me in time for the Academy dinner.

"I have ordered sent to you 50 dollars, and whenever you have time send one of your slaves out to bring you those Jefferson clothes you speak about and send them over here by express. I will double the amount if necessary. They have been at me for a long while to do this Jefferson Monument and I have not yet decided to undertake it. It is a big affair, very important and very conspicuous, and I don't want to do it unless it can be done in a damned swell way, and that costs time and money, and I am beginning to look at things carefully in that direction now. It's bully in you to offer to get these things for me, and I appreciate the offer *much*.

"What a gay old roll of geniuses that . . . . . (I leave the proper name for you to fill to your fancy) sent to us all at 50 dollars per head. The gall of a litter of bull pups is nothing to that.

"Mrs. Saint-Gaudens joins me in love to your wife and yourself. When you see Sargent, tell him things for me.

"It was impossible for me to exhibit with you this year; I have been in pain for a long while, but hope I will be over it some time or other, and as soon as it goes I will send something over. I would like to exhibit the Sherman group, but it is costly business, although I don't mind that so much. The trouble is that I would have to have someone who understands it thoroughly sent over from here to set

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

it up properly. It is a very complicated machine, and then, don't you think it kind of pretentious? I know it looks like a pose of modesty, but my things make me so damned sick; I assure you that is the case. The action of the Royal Academy in electing me makes me wonder whether the world has gone mad or whether I am more of a damned fool than I think I am. Really, as I look at my things they make me so tired, I wonder people don't go hang themselves after seeing some of them. However, I am evidently not entirely right, so if it does not seem too pretentious and does not cost me one hundred million dollars, I will send it next year.

"The big English sheepdog, 'Doodles'—one with no tail and whose body is so covered with hair that he looks like a busted mattress, has just jumped up on the couch beside me and lies on the Navajo blanket in the flickering sunlight. "Good-bye,

"AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS."

The statue of Charles Stewart Parnell is in Dublin, where St. Gaudens was born. The Sherman group is in Central Park, New York, the General being preceded by a noble figure of Victory.

St. Gaudens's enclosure, written to Mr. Paton, runs thus: "You would be surprised to see how I am perpetrating this letter. It is eight o'clock in the morning; I am on the porch of my studio, which faces south; just above is a vine-covered trellis; the vine is not fully leaved, but enough so that the sunlight shimmers through easily. Five miles beyond the portico is Ascutney mountain, which is the height of Vesuvius and very much its shape. The sky is one of those wonderful soft European ones. The breeze is light and gentle and there is something consoling in it all, something poetic.

"Well! I am lying on a couch in the corner and looking in your direction, south-west. On the chair beside me is a TALKING machine, if you please! and all this stuff I am *talking* into the machine, because it fatigues what little grey matter and digestive apparatus I have to write; besides, I enjoy the "gassing" away greatly; nobody can stop me; I cannot be thwarted or interrupted. Presently my handsome, god-like secretary will take the machine, carry it over to his little

## AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

place, put two little affairs in his ears, listen to my stuff, transcribe it on the typewriter, and that is what you see before you. It is the damnedest most unpoetic thing imaginable. Nevertheless the vine leaves flicker to and fro over it and me as well as on the beautiful Navajo blanket which covers my knees.

"Singularly enough the only two letters I have to write this morning are this one to you and one to Ned Abbey, who has written me four letters in his life and I have written him about the same number in mine. What I have written here is so poetical that I think I will have the typewriter repeat it to him."

Although the Jefferson costume incident was not completed until the following year, let it be rounded off at this point. Writing to St. Gaudens on May 24th, 1907, Abbey says: "I sent off yesterday by the American express—carriage paid—a small parcel containing two old coats, a ditto waistcoat, and an aged pair of nankeen breeches. One coat has but one tail, and is otherwise in bad repair—but, like us, it still has style." St. Gaudens replied on June 18th, 1907:

"DEAR OLD FELLOW.—Just a word to tell you that the package has arrived. Two coats, one vest, and a pair of breeches, all admirable for my purpose, and in good condition. I bless you with all my heart and wish I were with you to thank you personally. Send the bill as soon as you can. I would write a long letter but I can't. You know, nevertheless, I am affectionately yours, and with love to your wife, in which my wife joins,

"I am yoursly,

"A. SAINT-GAUDENS."

The bill was never found, and therefore not sent, the explanation being given by Abbey in a letter to Mr. Low in 1908, recalling those early days in New York, when he had the studio in Old University Building. "It was there," Abbey says, "that St. Gaudens came to see me one day—I think in '75—escorted by little Joe Evans, to ask about a uniform for Sergeant Jasper, of whom he was going to do a portrait statue for Charleston; and it is to my everlasting discredit and humiliation that *I was short with him*. The truth is Jimmy Kelly about that time was active in getting up the Art Students' League,

## AN ACT OF REPARATION

and he and Joe Evans and one or two more would hold caucuses, business meetings, etc., in the corners, in a whisper, which finally got a bit too thick . . . and when St. Gaudens was brought in, I thought he was another, and I'm not sure I didn't tell him I couldn't be bothered or some beastly thing (it will always rankle). I saw in some paper that he was going to do a statue of T. Jefferson, and therefore I got and sent him a genuine lot of garments of the period—but I never told him why."

Mr. Low's comment on this incident—in his lecture on Abbey and Howard Pyle, from which quotations have already been made—must be recorded. “ ‘I never told him why,’ ” he repeats: “there you have the whole man drawn by his own graphic pen. Petulant at times, no outburst of this kind that was not repented at once, and some kindness repaid extravagantly the momentary petulance.”

St. Gaudens lived only a brief time in which to enjoy his English honours. He died on August 3rd in 1907.

Resuming the record of 1906, a letter of Abbey's to Dr. White, on February 9th, has some characteristic passages: “I did not agree with what you said about football. As you know, I think a game should be played more for the fun of playing it well, and when it gets so classy that each man has to have a trainer and rubber it gets too good. I think, too, that the desire to win—*anyhow*—is a poor thing. However, you wouldn't agree with me. I don't believe, nevertheless, that you would enjoy playing chess with a man who stole your pieces off the board in order to win.

“There has been an election, and all the men you know have been defeated, and all the other men you are acquainted with have been elected to Parliament. I have not been offered a post in the new Cabinet—and don't sit up now any more waiting for a telegram to tell me I'm Irish Secretary or something.

“Bobs and Jims [the dogs] are very well. Jims stays out of doors and Bobs needs a bath badly. That curious smell you notice when the wind is in the west is Bobs.

“I don't think I have anything more to say. You might tell folks, when they say that I ought to work in my own country, that Rubens

COURT BEFORE JUSTICE SHALLOW'S HOUSE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Three feet by two feet two inches.

1906.

"KING HENRY IV," PART II, ACT III, SCENE II.

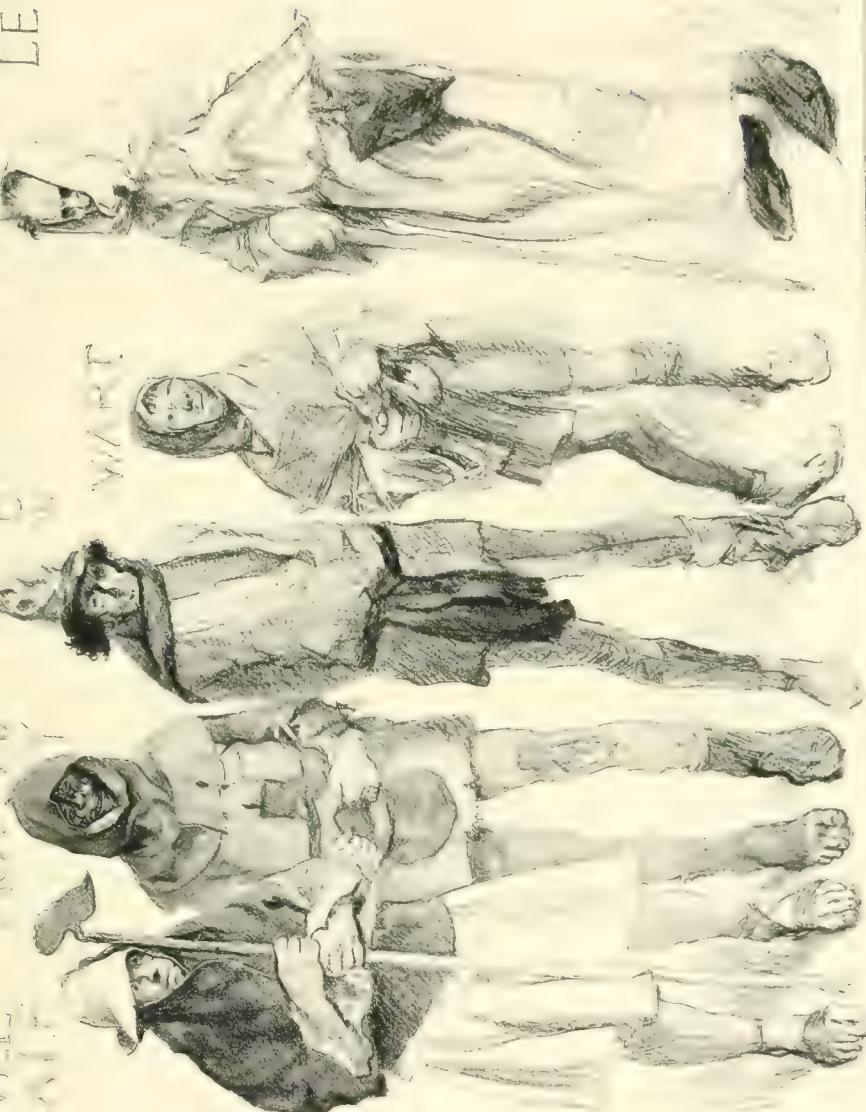


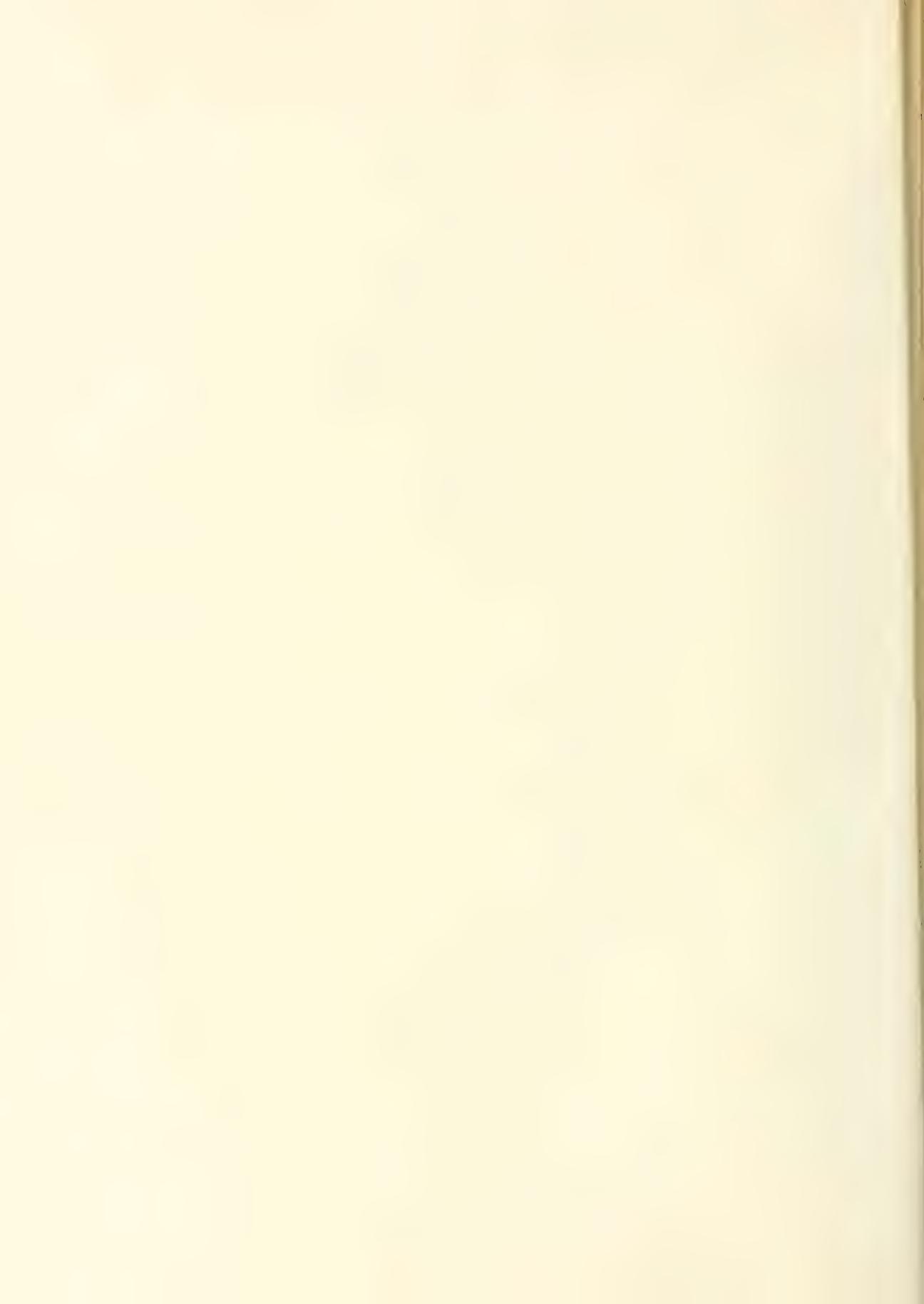
TRAVELLING

TRAVELLING

TRAVELLING

TRAVELLING





## ART COSMOPOLITAN

did a lot of good work in Italy and France, and that Van Dyck did some very good things in England and Italy and France, and that Holbein did some good things in England, and so on, and so on, and that I never heard that anybody complained. It seems to me that the thing is to get it done! A *real* American, after all, is a red Indian!"

On February 27th is a letter to the same friend, who was rusticating: "I am glad to know from Osler that you are so much better, and trust that the air of the farm—the scent of the new-mown hay, etc.—is doing you all sorts of good. We have had the incubator hard at it for some weeks with flattering results. (I don't know who, exactly, the results flatter—but there it is.) Two nice Jersey calves smile at us from the stable—and our damson tree has blown down. Farming news otherwise is scarce. Giles has painted the cart—red wheels and yellow body. You can see it quite distinctly. He has also put a splice in one of the wheels of the wheelbarrow. I am trying to write such news as I suppose will interest a farmer—but I am now at the end of it...."

The following composite letter from some old American friends acknowledged the gift of a mug which Abbey had painted for the Salmagundi Club in New York. Other artists had done the same, the purpose being to raise funds by the sale of them. The first writer is Mr. W.H. Shelton, the Secretary of the Club, and the interpolated note is from Mr. Harry Fenn, the illustrator:

"MY DEAR ABBEY,

"March 8th, 1906.

"I got the mug out of the Public Stores this morning. A wise official valued it at £1, decorated crockery at 60 % art tax. I paid the three dollars, a few cents short, and walked out with the box. You are an angel, but you are not a good packer; it moved a little with every roll of the ship—like a man breathing—and the fellow in the pot hat got his ankles rubbed slightly, likewise his neighbour in spots. This may be an improvement—it gives it age. If there are any spots that mar it I will touch it judiciously.

"We dined Sir Purdon Clarke the other day, and he is wild to paint a mug next year. Your mug is number 14 in order of arrival but

## THE SALMAGUNDI MUGS

number 24 at the sale. I haven't got Smith's yet. The dinner will be about the middle of April. You will receive your invitation and we will put your empty chair in mourning. It is a great auction. I sold one mug last year for 202 dollars. I bid it in for a member who happened to be in Paris and sent me that sum for any old mug. I sold one of Howard Pyle's for 100 dollars in 1901, and one of Beckwith's for 75 dollars in 1903, but that was before mugs riz. Harry Fenn has just been cleaning up the edges and touching up the high lights as only he can.

"DEAR ABBEY.—Just a line to say 'How are you?' Your mug is jolly in every way. It is just possible I may be in London this summer; if so I will do myself the pleasure of looking you up.

"Sincerely yours, H. F."

"After Fenn—I will send you soon a catalogue of our Costume Collection—645 volumes—nearly 400 folios and 4to's. It will appear first at the said Library dinner with the menu on the last page.

"Yours in gratitude,

"W. H. SHELTON."

From Mr. Shelton's *History of the Salmagundi Club*, published in 1918 by the Houghton Mifflin Co., I borrow the account of Abbey's contribution: "The decoration was one of Abbey's quaint and playful designs. An English village inn, with barmaid in the door, is pictured on one side of the mug, and on the other are three very Abbeysque figures—a jolly roysterer with pipe and bowl, a bell-ringer, ringing; and between the two a half-t tipsy Puritan, whom they are evidently leading astray, and circling the top and bottom of the mug this rollicking couplet:

'He that will not merry, merry be, with generous bowl and toast,  
May he in Bridewell be shut up and fast bound to a post.'

—Abbey's mug was knocked down to Mr. Saltus for 461 dollars."

The Abbeys had been using their car, often on long journeys, in search of a new home, for it was Abbey's intention to give up Morgan Hall at the end of his lease and buy a country house of his own—one with architectural features of an earlier date, where he





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COLUMBUS IN THE NEW WORLD.

OIL.

Ten feet by seven feet three inches.

1906.

## THE “COLUMBUS”

would have room for his large and ever-increasing library, and where his studio would be more remote from farmyards, with all their distractions, than at Fairford. In search of this ideal place, and armed with order to view from advertisers in *Country Life*, Henry James was often one of the company. At first he had favoured and encouraged Abbey's scheme, but later, in March, we find him writing: “The only way to appear as meek and lowly and ‘restricted’ as you are is just to keep on quietly with Morgan Hall, Chelsea Lodge, the motor—and Henry James.”

Abbey was represented this year at the Royal Academy by his “Columbus in the New World.” Columbus, richly clad and in full armour, grasping the Royal banner of Spain, kneels behind the three priests, who, clothed in magnificent black and gold vestments, are consecrating the New World before an improvised altar covered with red velvet. A further group, among them the brothers Pinzon, who commanded the two caravels, kneel apart, and three of the company bear aloft the banners of the “Green Cross,” a device of Columbus, presented to him by Ferdinand and Isabella. Farther away are the sailors and the three ships at anchor, while the background is filled with a flight of flamingoes, streaming away from the land, thus symbolising the departure of the native, the indigenous, the wild, upon the arrival of the foreign and the cultivated to implant civilisation. The picture, very fine in colour and design, was, in the foreground, not altogether satisfactory to Abbey, and he intended to make further studies for it at the seashore later on, but so much new work lay before him that the time never came.

In May Abbey made for Miss Ellen Terry a drawing of Olivia in *The Vicar of Wakefield* for the souvenir programme of the great actress's dramatic jubilee, June 12th, 1906. Miss Terry's letter of acknowledgment says: “You are angelic—but you can't help that.” This was Abbey's last task for a long while, for at the end of May, suddenly, came the breakdown of which from time to time we have seen foreshadowings, and for several months Abbey was far from his happy vigorous self. A letter to Dr. White on June 1st tells something of the trouble: “You must excuse a scrawl. I have been ill and

## WISE COUNSEL

can scarcely see now. A bad cold on the liver—and I am afraid a little overwork and over-anxiety—worries and worries! I disremember if I ever felt so dambad...." Five days later Abbey says that he has seen Osler and has been sent to bed, and a little later, when strong enough, he went to Swanage.

We find Henry James again as counsellor when, on July 6th, he wrote to Mrs. Abbey: ". . . Ned's indisposition, of which I heard something from J. B. Warner, interests me not less, and I hope with all my heart *that* demon, too, is exorcised. . . . It is too long a stretch of work—of work at high pressure. *Slow down*, put on the brakes, stop at every station, and visit the refreshment room. That is all you want—more buns and ginger-beer and *Tit-Bits* (at the news-stand), and less mere steaming ahead. I do hope this system is *already* showing good results. I didn't write, as I was moved to, after Joe Warner told me of your going to Swanage, because I have long since learned that the cloud of enquiring letters in cases of Modern Illness add a new terror to the state alike of Patient and Nurse. . . . Keep it up—I mean the keeping of it *down* (the fever of creation and the storm and stress of the studio). Above all, don't worry—everything arranges itself. I pat Edwin very affectionately and healingly and soothingly on the back and dream of the day when I may see you again."

On recovering sufficiently Abbey returned to Fairford, and then made for the Tyrol and Italy. Work was not to be thought of, optical trouble being feared, but as it turned out nothing was wrong there. Letters to Mr. Swinstead and to Mr. Clarke, both in December, give the artist's own account of his pilgrimage. To Mr. Swinstead: "I am getting right again—but I have to go slowly as I easily tire. I hope to be a boy again soon now—and next season will see me with my little bat and ball, chopping across, as usual. . . . We went to a dreary hole called Swanage—where I saw with entire absence of interest 942,856,311,046,122,460 children digging sand. Then we went to the Austrian Tyrol. . . . The Austrian Tyrol would suit you down to the ground, in places. Castelruth, which is high up over the Brenner Pass (you get off at Waidbruck) is a most picturesque and withal clean place, with an excellent pub., cheap. There is no cricket going.

## A TYROLEAN HOLIDAY

Boys borrow their Pa's whips in the evening—and do stunts cracking them. The valleys re-echo the reports—and that seems to be the game. By the way, the Rhodes scholars are coming to play a game of base-ball at Fairford in the spring. I wish you would come and see it."

To Mr. Clarke: "We went abroad in September to Innsbruck for a few days and then to Sterzing for a few more days—a most picturesque old town—and then to Waidbruck (all along the Brenner) and from there up to St. Ulrich's—which we didn't like—and then back to Waidbruck and up a tortuous and picturesque road to Castelruth—where we stayed some little time. I advise you to go there some time. Then we went to Bozen and from there to Levico—where there is a new and gorgeous hotel—some kind of baths very popular with Italians. We went thence to Belluno. We drove from some station—can't remember the name—and after a night at Belluno we got a machine [a little carriage] and drove to Cortina—the drive you recommended. It was very beautiful—and if I were a landscape painter I should be tempted to pitch my tent at Cadore for a bit. Cortina was closing—and we were the last out of the hotel—the big hotel up high—a first-rate place—but Cortina is a bit too watering-placey for the likes of us. I like to see the natives when I go abroad.

"We went to Munich for a few days—but how it has changed in half a dozen years! A dreadful tram, ramping through the place—but this is now common to all these places abroad. They seem to revel in noise. London can't say a great deal for itself either nowadays. These motor'buses are maddening. London used to be the quietest city I knew of—but a couple of years have completely changed that."

Abbey returned to England early in October and stopped at Chelsea Lodge to finish the reredos for Paris—particularly the Magdalen after the Resurrection. Dr. Morgan, the vicar, who had gone to Fairford the previous spring to see the reredos, had been pressing for its delivery. With one exception he was altogether satisfied, but he thought the face of the Magdalen too "mundane" and wrote begging Abbey to repaint it. This for a long time Abbey refused to do,

## THE PARIS REREDOS

for he considered it the best head he had ever produced, but finally—to get the reredos away—he yielded, and never ceased to regret that he had done so. He expected to finish it in about five weeks, but one change led to another, and five months passed before it was brought to a conclusion, and not then to his satisfaction. Without waiting for the opening of the Royal Academy, and in spite of the fact that he would have nothing there in that year of 1907, he had the reredos sent at once to its destination. Consequently he was not in Fairford until March and did not return to town for any length of time until he took the Harrisburg work to the Imperial Institute in the spring of the following year.

One other letter should be quoted before we leave 1906. It is to the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the American poet. The date is November 15th, 1906:

“MY DEAR ALDRICH,

“As I was going into the Athenæum the other afternoon I met Dobson coming out. He explained that he had been doing a rondeau in commemoration of your seventieth birthday.

“Says I, ‘You are mixed, dear friend—you mean Alden; Aldrich is nowhere near seventy—I don’t know where he *is*, for it is these many decades since I have seen him, but he isn’t seventy. Send the rondeau to Alden.’ He said it was then too late—as it was in the post—and seemed positive that he hadn’t made any mistake.

“I think still that he has, but in order to be in anything that is going, I send a line to say how glad I am about it! I can’t write anything original about, or to, folks who are seventy. I spend a good deal of time sending congratulations about—but, original or not, I wish that the succeeding years may bring more and more power to your elbow—and before you are much older than you are (whatever age that may be!) I shall have the pleasure of seeing you and grasping your hand. I think you and I are the only male survivors at a little dinner at poor George Boughton’s in the spring of ’79—Browning and Wm. Black were there, and, with dear old George, they have joined the majority. . . . I am the better for

JESUS AND MARY MAGDALEN.

" JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, ' TOUCH ME NOT, FOR I AM NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER.' "  
ST. JOHN.

THE RIGHT WING OF A TRIPYCH, PAINTED FOR THE AMERICAN CHURCH IN PARIS.

1904-1907.







## T. B. ALDRICH

having had such friends as these were to me, and I hope they know I appreciate them. . . ."

In *Harper's* in these two years 1905-1906 appeared the drawings for *Henry VI.*, Parts I., II., and III., and *Macbeth* and *Julius Cæsar*, from which examples have been chosen.



My friend my benefactor - - - - - - - - - -

## CHAPTER XL

### WORK FOR HARRISBURG

1907-1908 Aged 54-56

The Decoration for Harrisburg—The Four Lunettes—The History of Pennsylvania—A “Visitor” at the South Kensington Schools—Theory of Decorative Painting—Woodcote Manor—Seymour Haden—An Exhibition at the Imperial Institute—Election to the Institut de France—An East Coast Holiday

In 1907 Abbey was continuously busy on the Harrisburg commission, and what progress he had made we gather from a letter to Mr. Johnson, who had superintended, as a labour of love or tribute of admiration, all Abbey's contracts for the Harrisburg work, which, owing to his insistence, were made direct with the State. The letter is written with all Abbey's clear sight and directness.

“I understand,” he begins, “that you would like me to send you an account of the present state of my work for the Harrisburg Capitol in order that you may pass it on to the Attorney-General, and I do so with pleasure.

“It was a great disappointment to me (to say nothing of the pecuniary loss) that I was prevented by illness from finishing the lunettes for the dome last autumn. I had fully expected to have these ready for the opening of the new Capitol, but in my anxiety to do this I put on extra pressure at a time when I should have been taking a holiday, and consequently I overworked and broke down. As you know, I was taken seriously ill a year ago, and for many months was unable to go on with my work at all, and was compelled by my doctors to take a complete rest. This has put the work back, but I am thankful to say that my health is now completely restored and the work is once more progressing rapidly. I confidently expect to complete the four lunettes and the four circular canvases for the dome this autumn.

“Of the four lunettes, each approximately 38 feet by 22 feet, three are practically finished. The four circular canvases for the pendentives, each 14 feet in diameter, are also practically finished.

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

These four represent respectively 'Law,' 'Religion,' 'Science,' 'Art.' The figures are 9 feet high, on a gold background (goldleaf).

"The figures in the lunettes are also 9 feet high, and represent:

"(1) 'Science Revealing the Treasures of the Earth.' An open mine is in the foreground, with miners climbing down into it, and in the early\* morning sky, poised over the mine are three figures: 'Science' pointing to the mine, accompanied by 'Fortune' and 'Abundance.' The trunks of huge, primeval trees rise from the surface of the mine and a rich landscape indicates that, in spite of the abundance of the fruits of the earth's surface, a wealth of treasure lies below it.

"(2) 'The Spirit of Vulcan.' Here are groups of iron and steel workers, about twenty figures, each 9 feet high: some engaged in hammering out a rudder post, others shaping red-hot steel armour-plate in a 'bending press,' others at work with other machinery—in the background smelting furnaces, etc., the size of the huge machines in proportion to the figures, and at the top, in clouds of steam and smoke, presiding over the place, sits Vulcan, the Genius of the workers in iron and steel.

"(3) 'The Spirit of Religious Liberty.' Pennsylvania was the first place in the world where people were really at liberty to worship as their consciences dictated, and this design presents a wide dark blue sea upon which are huge ships in full sail, the foreground ship about 20 feet high. The figure of 'Religious Liberty,' accompanied on either side by 'Faith' and 'Hope' points towards the New World.

"(4) Oil. 'The Spirit of Light.' The fourth lunette represents an oil-field. The background is crowded with derricks and in the foreground is a great company of figures symbolising the bringing of light out of darkness.

"In order to complete the above amount of work, I have had to build a large addition to my studio, to make room, not only for the canvases, but for the huge scaffoldings, ladders, easels, standards, etc., required for work on such a large scale, and, of course, before touching these huge canvases I made many designs and a multitude of preliminary studies. I also provided myself with models

\* Changed later to a golden sky.

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

of ships and other necessary properties. I was enabled to study and make studies of effects in the iron works on the Tyne. The details of all the machinery have been supplied to me by the works at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania."

So far Abbey has been describing what he had finished or almost finished. He now turns to the remainder of his great task:

### *"The House of Representatives.*

"I have made all the necessary preliminary research for the work I propose to do in the House of Representatives; have provided myself with the necessary literature on the subject; have been allowed by the authorities at South Kensington Museum to have careful copies made of a number of original articles of dress of the time of William Penn, from an unique collection in their possession; and have prepared the designs for all the principal spaces in this chamber and have made many preparatory studies for this work.

"The middle panel, back of the rostrum, is an elaborate composition, 35 feet square, representing an Apotheosis of the State of Pennsylvania, and composed of fifty to seventy life-sized figures. A figure typifying 'Pennsylvania' sits at the top in the middle, and underneath, on the pedestal supporting this figure, are figures of the early founders of the Commonwealth. Below these are seated figures of governors, jurists, senators, personages of eminence in the history of the State. Below these, to the left, are figures of soldiers of '61, etc., hurrying to the defence of the State, and to the right are groups of mechanics, miners, etc., etc. In the background are ships on the stocks, blast furnaces, etc.

"To the right and left of the middle panel are two other panels: 'Penn's Treaty with the Indians,' on the left; and 'The Reading of the Declaration of Independence' on the right.

"The design for the circular panel in the ceiling of this chamber, 24 feet in diameter, is also completed and some of the studies prepared. This design is composed of twenty-four figures; the background is blue with gold stars and the Signs of the Zodiac in gold. I think this is one of the most successful designs I have ever made.

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

### *“The Senate.*

“With regard to the Senate, I have already made two series of designs for this chamber. The first series fitted the shapes, sizes, and position of the spaces allotted to me according to the first set of architectural plans sent me by the architect. After these plans were altered and a second set was sent me, I made a second series of designs, suited to the changed shapes, sizes and positions of the second set of plans. After this, still a third set of plans was sent me, in which the shapes, sizes, and positions of the spaces were altogether different from either of the two preceding, and, in consequence of this a great amount of my time, energy and labour has been wasted, and I must spend further thought upon the present arrangement before settling finally on the designs for this chamber.

“I may say that this condition of things was true also of the spaces in the House of Representatives, and I lost much time in rearranging my designs to suit the new arrangement of spaces, but the new spaces here lent themselves more readily to these designs than will be the case with the spaces in the Senate.”

Abbey's own difficulties over the changing dimensions or proportions in the Harrisburg building plans no doubt emphasised his belief in the importance to the decorative painter of a thorough knowledge of every architectural detail of the rooms he is to decorate. They also peculiarly fitted him for the post of “Visitor” for the School of Painting at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, where he was on the Council for three years—1907–1910. Mr. Augustus Spencer, then Principal and Head Master of the College, has set down a few notes referring to Abbey's work there: “He was keenly interested [says Mr. Spencer] in forming a British School of Decorative Art, and he told me that this was his aim in consenting to act as ‘Visitor.’

“In going the round of the studios he impressed upon the students, above all things, the necessity for sound draughtsmanship, as fundamental to all art worthy the name. He would have nothing left to chance. In the figure compositions he insisted upon full-sized cartoons being made in charcoal, and carried out, as far as possible,

## AS ART "VISITOR"

in that medium, which proved a great help in executing the composition in colour.

"His genial and kindly manner, backed by his profound knowledge, led the students to look forward eagerly to his visits, as they knew he would have some new inspiration to impart to them.

"He was in full sympathy with the broad basis upon which the College training was founded. The lectures upon Greek and Roman mythology and the History of European Civilisation and Art he regarded as necessary to feed and stimulate the imagination of the students. He was a great believer in the study of architecture, recognising its value as fundamental to the work of a sculptor, designer, or decorator, and he advocated the practice of each student spending a year under Professor Beresford Pite, F.R.I.B.A., Professor of Architecture, whose teaching he considered invaluable.

"Deeply absorbed as he was in the School of Painting, every branch of the College work came in for a share of his sympathetic interest. The Embroidery Class had a great attraction for him, and he was always welcomed as an admirer and encourager of the craft.

"With all his fine feeling he was eminently practical; his suggestions as to how the work of the College could be brought to bear upon those industries of the country which were dependent upon art for their success were always welcomed and were much valued by the staff of the College."

Two extracts from Abbey's own writing on the subject of mural decoration will make his position as an instructor even more clear. From one of the annual reports drawn up by him is this passage: "A decorative painting presupposes a place to be decorated, and this place has a shape, size and architectural surroundings. It is, therefore, indispensable in all decorative painting that these be exactly stated and thoroughly understood before the colour composition is undertaken, and herein lies the problem for the pupil. His subject must be designed with reference to these. When, therefore, the shape, size, and architectural surroundings are not given with the subject. . . . there is no decorative problem for the pupil to work out, and his painting becomes merely an easel picture."

## DECORATIVE PAINTING

And here is a letter belonging to this period on the training of students as decorative painters: "I think that too little attention is given by students to careful—hard and fast—constructional drawing, and that inasmuch as drawing and black-and-white design are the most permanent qualities that any decorative painting can have—carelessness in these particulars is likely to lead to disaster in after life—if it is permitted to become a habit. No matter how fine a colour sense a young painter may have, he will lose it to a great extent as he grows older.

"We know what Michael Angelo's and Leonardo's drawings and designs are like—but we haven't the slightest idea of what the colour may have been when it was first painted. The colour of very few of the pictures painted by the Old Masters is to-day at all like the original colour. It may be better—or it may not be so good—but it is certainly different. Furthermore, a painted decoration must take its place as part of an architectural design and the architectural setting must be considered in making a composition. For this reason a painting school should have sufficient space to carry on the work that is being done.

"Modelled spaces should *frequently* be provided, perhaps by students of architecture, into which the designs of the students in the school for painting should be fixed or composed.

"The gist of what I believe a student should be made to do is to be careful in his construction, and accurate in his drawing, as accurate as is humanly possible. If he is a colourist this won't hurt his colour—and if he is not (and few of them are), he will have the drawing and composition of his design to justify it.

"I can only speak of my own practice, as my own student days were cut short, and I had painfully to hark back in later years.

"I don't remember who it was who gave me this invaluable tip—but I think it is wholesome advice, and cheers up many a dull day's work. This is to try to make the *difficult* part of any drawing, any study, any design, the most interesting thing in it.

"Many years ago Tadema said to me, 'You are too careless with your hands. Do as I do. If you have a small hand to draw, draw it

## ADVICE TO STUDENTS

large first—then draw it from nature again—in your picture. You will find you will do it more easily.' I followed this practice in my black-and-white drawings for years—and I very frequently do so still.

"To sum up: I am positive that young students (they are not pushed by dates of exhibitions, or architects, or by hurrying publishers), should acquire while in a school habits of extreme precision and accuracy. A student of everything else must do this if he is to amount to anything in science, literature, in anything in fact—and it is nothing less than disastrous for a young man to begin his career by allowing himself to be slovenly and inaccurate. The hasty sketch of a man who has studied patiently and closely is worth something—but the slop of an uncultivated youth has no value whatever."

"I have always looked upon my profession as a serious one—a learned profession in which one is constantly sifting and eliminating and adapting his knowledge and experience to its innumerable purposes and requirements."

And now, to return again to Abbey's letter to Mr. Johnson, we come to a very interesting passage from which some idea may be gained of the incessant and minute toil that, when the artist is sincere, lurks concealed behind the smiling hues of such decorations as these. "As you, of course, know, the *least* part of the labour bestowed upon work of this magnitude is the labour of putting the settled designs upon the final large canvas. The greatest part of the labour is not represented by what the spectator sees upon the canvas, but rather by what he does not see there, for before the canvas is touched an exhaustive study of the subject in hand must be made. If the subject is representative of modern science and labour, there must be careful study of machinery, and of the workers and their surroundings. If the subjects are historical, all the necessary literature must be collected and read and sifted and a study of the dress and manners of the period must be made; the necessary costumes and other objects and all the data bearing upon the subject must be acquired; and, finally, when a design has been settled upon and made (a design suited to the shape, size and position of the space

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

to be decorated) elaborate separate drawings and studies must be made of each figure and object, before the first canvas is begun.

"If after all this preparation a design had been prepared for a space 20 feet by 8 feet, and this space is afterwards altered to a space 9 feet by 10 feet or *vice versa*, it is obvious that the design cannot fit the new space—is, probably, not suitable for a space so wholly different in shape, and, consequently, even if the final canvas has not been touched, a great part of the preceding labour has been lost and the time and nervous force of the artist wasted, for a new design must be made suited to (fitted to) the shape of the new space."

"I have tried to avoid all mention of the technical difficulties almost insurmountable (the relation of lines to spaces, questions of scale and proportion) which arise when one is called upon to make compositions, designed for certain spaces, fit other spaces of other proportions."

Abbey's assistant, Mr. Board, is very interesting on the Harrisburg methods: "His process of evolving each subject, started perhaps with the merest pencil sketch in a sketch book or a small oil study; this would pass through various phases of elimination or refining, often with the help of little groups of mannikins set up, arranged and re-arranged until the required composition was obtained. Then careful studies of each figure were done in charcoal, pastel, or paint from the living model—they were then generally squared off on to the canvas, but in the case of the Pennsylvania decoration he introduced a new idea. In that case he had the studies photographed and turned into lantern slides. Then, in the evenings, when the main lines of the composition were fixed on the big canvas and the position of each figure lightly indicated, each study would be thrown on it and manoeuvred into its correct place—which, when done, the outlines would be fixed on the canvas with charcoal. Each figure was treated in the same way until the whole composition was completed. Mr. Abbey found this plan much more expeditious than the usual 'squaring off' for large canvases. Following that, the whole composition was painted in monochrome and finally in colour, always with the aid of the studies and the model posing.

## ABBEY AT WORK

I have seen him sometimes at work practically surrounded, with canvas in front, model posing on one side in costume, close by the lay figure similarly posed and in similar costume, and pinned up in all directions on boards and easels, numbers of studies for the same figure. Due to shortsightedness, he always worked close to his model."

Mr. Simmonds also has something to say of the great Harrisburg operations: "An incident which displayed his great dexterity happened while we were enlarging the figures (9 feet high) on the 'Steel-Workers' Lunette. We marked the height of one of the figures, and the study was put down beside the canvas; he then took one of the long-handled brushes which we were using for the work, and with a full brush started at the back of the neck and drew the line of the back of the figure down to the heel, quickly, without a break. The whole figure was then finished by the usual method of enlarging by squaring, and the back line was found to be exactly right and remained the outline of the figure."

"If, therefore," Abbey's letter to Mr. Johnson concludes, "my work has not advanced as rapidly as I had hoped and expected, I think I may say that this is not due to any negligence or lack of zeal on my part, and if the authorities of the State will have patience, the State, in return, shall have the best work that my powers are capable of producing, and at the earliest moment possible, for I shall allow nothing over which I have control to interfere with this work for my native State."—The foregoing letter, with its bewildering record of energy and productiveness, does not, however, tell all that Abbey had been doing for the Capitol. In addition to his own painting, and in addition to the work contracted for, he had, at the request of the architect, made designs for all the architectural ornament required for the walls and ceilings, and had supplied the colour schemes for the House of Representatives and for the Senate. Although it involved much extra labour and a vast number of designs, incorporating the arms and emblems of the State, he felt that an advantage was gained for his paintings by a setting of his own devising, besides adding greatly to the magnificence and beauty of the

KING HENRY VIII AND ANNE BOLEYN.

KING HENRY: "THE FAIREST HAND I EVER TOUCH'D !  
O BEAUTY, TILL NOW I NEVER KNEW THEE !"

Twenty-one and a half inches by fifteen inches.

1908.

"KING HENRY VIII," ACT I, SCENE IV.







## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

chambers. The relief was in gold. The colour for the House of Representatives was a rich dark blue, and the same colour as the background of his 24 feet circular ceiling, "The Hours." And when, after Abbey's death, his ceiling, "The Hours," was set in place, 40 feet or more above the floor, it melted perfectly into its surroundings, and the chamber became the harmonious whole which he had striven to make it. The scheme for the Senate was gold relief ornament, with green for background.

The style chosen by Abbey for the House of Representatives was Italian Renaissance, and for the Senate French Renaissance. Incomplete as his Harrisburg work is—with the long frieze in the Senate Chamber not begun—there is enough there not only to astonish the visitor by its beauty, abundance, and power, but to link the artist's fame for ever with it.

Abbey had no cricket in 1907. At the end of the summer he indulged in a little house-hunting—made necessary by the fact that Morgan Hall could not be purchased; and on September 16th, after the briefest of inspections, he bought Woodcote Manor, then the home of the late Sir Francis Seymour Haden, the surgeon and etcher—a rambling edifice, chiefly Jacobean, as remote from towns as Abbey liked, and lending itself to extension. The house stands high among woods and pasture land in a park of forty acres in that great sparsely populated district between Alton and Winchester. It is a part of the village of Bramdean; the nearest town is Alresford; the nearest stations are West Meon and Ropley. All kinds of alterations and improvements were to be made under Abbey's direction in the following years, but he himself was not destined to live there.

From a letter or so written by Seymour Haden, the life-tenant of Woodcote, to the new owner I take some particulars of the property: "It is a matter of agreeable surprise to me to learn that an artist so distinguished as yourself is to become the ultimate possessor of one of the most interesting houses I have ever seen, though I do not know and have not the least idea when and on what terms you are to become its ultimate possessor, and shall be glad of any information you can give me on that point, inasmuch as two lives

## WOODCOTE MANOR

must drop before that can be, my own age being ninety and Lady Haden's eighty-one."

"...Comparatively few alterations will carry it back to the time of Elizabeth, when the present house was built, and the many traces which still exist of what it was in the time of the Bishop of Blois, a brother of the Conqueror...."

Sir Seymour went on to congratulate Abbey on undertaking so vast and novel a task as his Harrisburg decorations, remarking that rarely did a successful Royal Academician break new ground so adventurously.

Abbey began in 1907 "The Education of Isabella the Catholic," an oil painting 7 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 4 inches. Isabella is seen passing through a cloister of the nunnery at Arevalo, where she was brought up, wearing over her blue and gold patterned dress a short, sleeveless, heraldic, silk mantle, red and gold, white and black, bearing the arms of Leon and Castile quarterly, and, as she moves along, listening to the Abbess at her side, who is reading to her from a breviary. Following close upon them, coming down a staircase, is a company of nuns, each bearing in her hands an educational object of the period. This Gothic picture, date about 1463, not quite finished when Abbey died, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in the following spring, 1912.

We now enter the year 1908, the first letter to be quoted dealing with a subject that was always very close to Abbey's heart—the question of the import duty in America on works of art. We have already seen him remonstrating with John Hay on this matter. In answer to a letter from Mr. Myron Pierce, the secretary of the American Free Art League, asking him for a statement of his views, he writes:

"MY DEAR SIR,

"February 3rd, 1908.

"It is difficult to think of anything new to say in favour of the removal of the duty upon works of art.

"I have always supposed that industries in the United States were protected in order to foster these industries. But in the case of a tax upon foreign works of art, far from fostering the home product, this tax does it the greatest possible injury.

THE EDUCATION OF ISABELLA THE CATHOLIC.

Seven feet six inches by four feet four inches.

BEGUN IN 1907, NEVER QUITE FINISHED.







## ANOTHER PROTEST

"An atmosphere of art is the breath of life to the artist. Without it he can neither flourish nor grow—and how can there be an atmosphere of art in a country which practically prohibits the artists of all other countries from sending their work to that country—thus destroying the possibility of that ingathering from the whole world of all the best and latest thoughts, which would help to produce the art atmosphere in which alone the arts can flourish ?

"Artists, as a rule, are not capitalists, and to send their work to America before it is sold, and pay the heavy duty demanded, is, as a rule, too great a speculation for them to venture upon. Consequently, the Parisian dealers, who are capitalists, but not artists, are the speculators who decide what pictures shall and what shall not enter the United States—and their selection does not depend upon the artistic quality of the pictures, but upon those qualities which, in their judgment, make the pictures saleable.

"American artists and their work are so liberally received and hospitably treated by all other countries, that it is a matter of chagrin and embarrassment to me that laws are made by my countrymen which keep the work of artists of other countries out of the United States—laws which hamper our own artists and benefit nobody else.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Very faithfully yours,

"EDWIN A. ABBEY."

In the spring of 1908 certain of Abbey's friends and colleagues had an opportunity of seeing what he had been doing for his native State, for the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, having been approached through the Royal College of Art at South Kensington, the East Gallery of the University was lent to the artist for five weeks, from March 18th, for a semi-private exhibition of eight of the Harrisburg paintings, before their despatch to America. Writing to Walter James on March 13th Abbey says: "I'm bringing my *magnii opii*—I suppose that is what they would be termed—up to the Imperial Institute, Univ. of London, next week as ever is, and I am getting clean tuckered-out, and am feeling sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before me. . . . Sorry we missed the

## A HARRISBURG EXHIBITION

Sicilians—I wanted to see the man [the famous Grassi] chew the other man's windpipe, and am much disappointed." The 'magnii opii' were the four lunettes and the four circular canvases for the pendentives as described above in the letter to Mr. Johnson. The exhibition was of intense interest to those who saw it: a new revelation of Abbey's vigour and genius. Among those who came to see the paintings were the King and the Queen and many other members of the Royal Family.

Abbey's work on this portion of his task was not done until the eight paintings were packed. It was then that—literally—the finishing touches were given, for with his own brush (as the London correspondent of the New York *Sun* amusingly described) the artist, "a well-attired smiling little man in a silk hat, holding in his left hand a large jampot," painted on the vast case the simple direction "To the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania." His mind remained ill at ease until on May 30th came a cablegram from Philadelphia containing the single word "Safe."

The decorations were quickly set in place, and from an article by Mr. Royal Cortissoz, which appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* for December, 1908, a few passages may be quoted here. The writer begins with a survey of the artist's career. Coming to his latest work, he says: "They are placed midway between the drum of the great dome and the massive piers supporting the whole structure. The lunettes are recessed well back of the curving line followed by the pendentives, and the ceilings of the arches, enclosing the larger paintings are richly coffered. The imposing cornice superimposed upon the piers forms a perfect base for Mr. Abbey's decorative scheme. He has been, indeed, very fortunate in his architectural environment. Classical in style, it has been handled with a due sense of dignity and no thin or frivolous details have been admitted. White marble rules below the cornice, save where the capitals are bright with gold. In the cornice itself, and in the conventional ornament on the pendentives around the artist's panels, blue is added to the arrangement of white and gold. The general effect is reposeful and cool. Mr. Abbey has made his work a very harmonious part of it...."

RELIGION.

Fourteen feet in diameter.

"FOR RELIGION, PURE RELIGION, I SAY, STANDETH NOT IN WEARING OF  
A MONK'S COWL, BUT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTICE AND WELL DOING."

LATIMER.







THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, ACCCOMPANIED BY FAITH AND HOPE,  
IS GUIDING THE SHIPS OF THE EARLY SETTLERS TO THE NEW WORLD.

Lunette, thirty-eight feet by twenty-two feet.

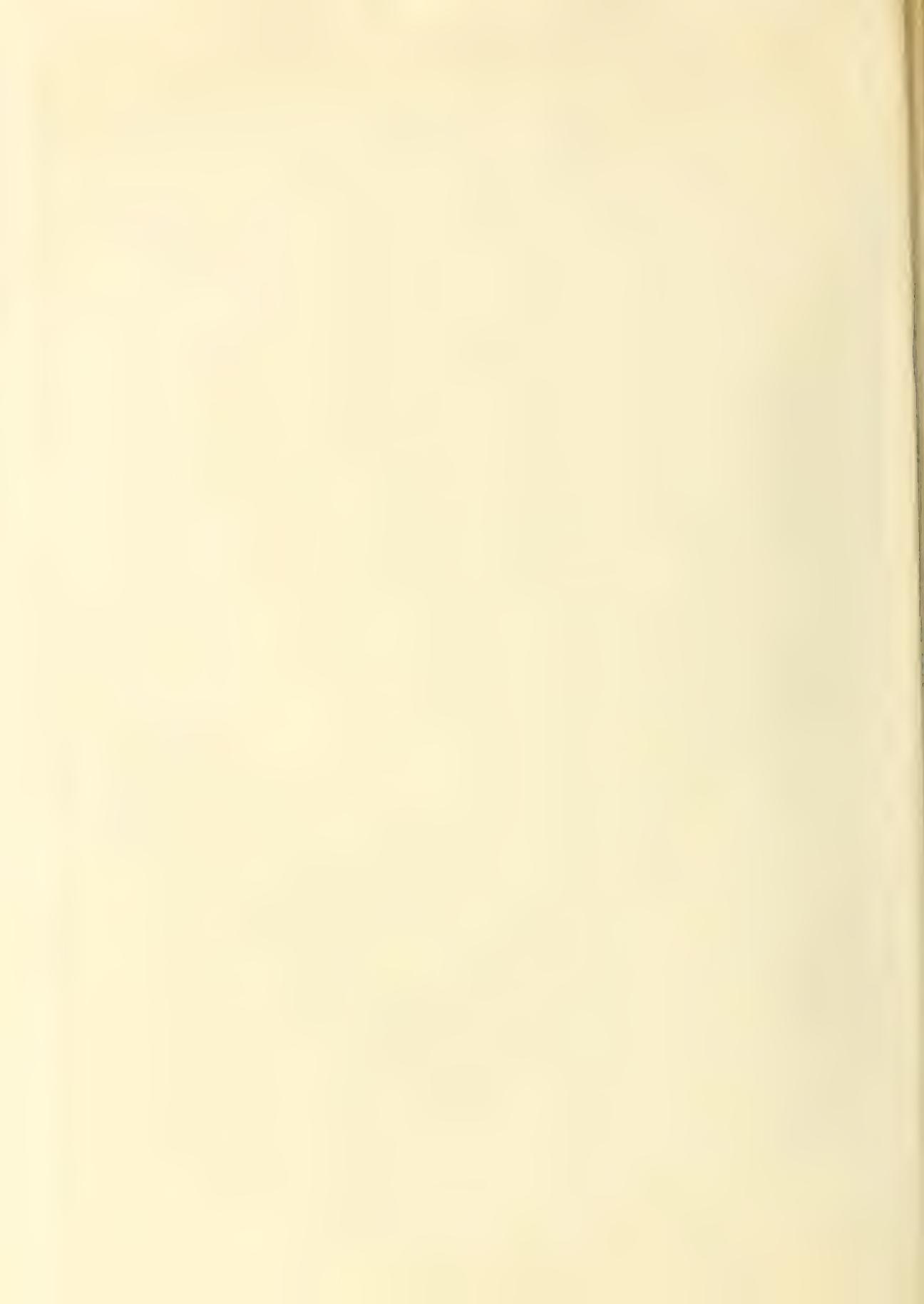
THREE OIL STUDIES FOR THIS LUNETTE.

1. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.
2. HOPE.
3. FAITH.

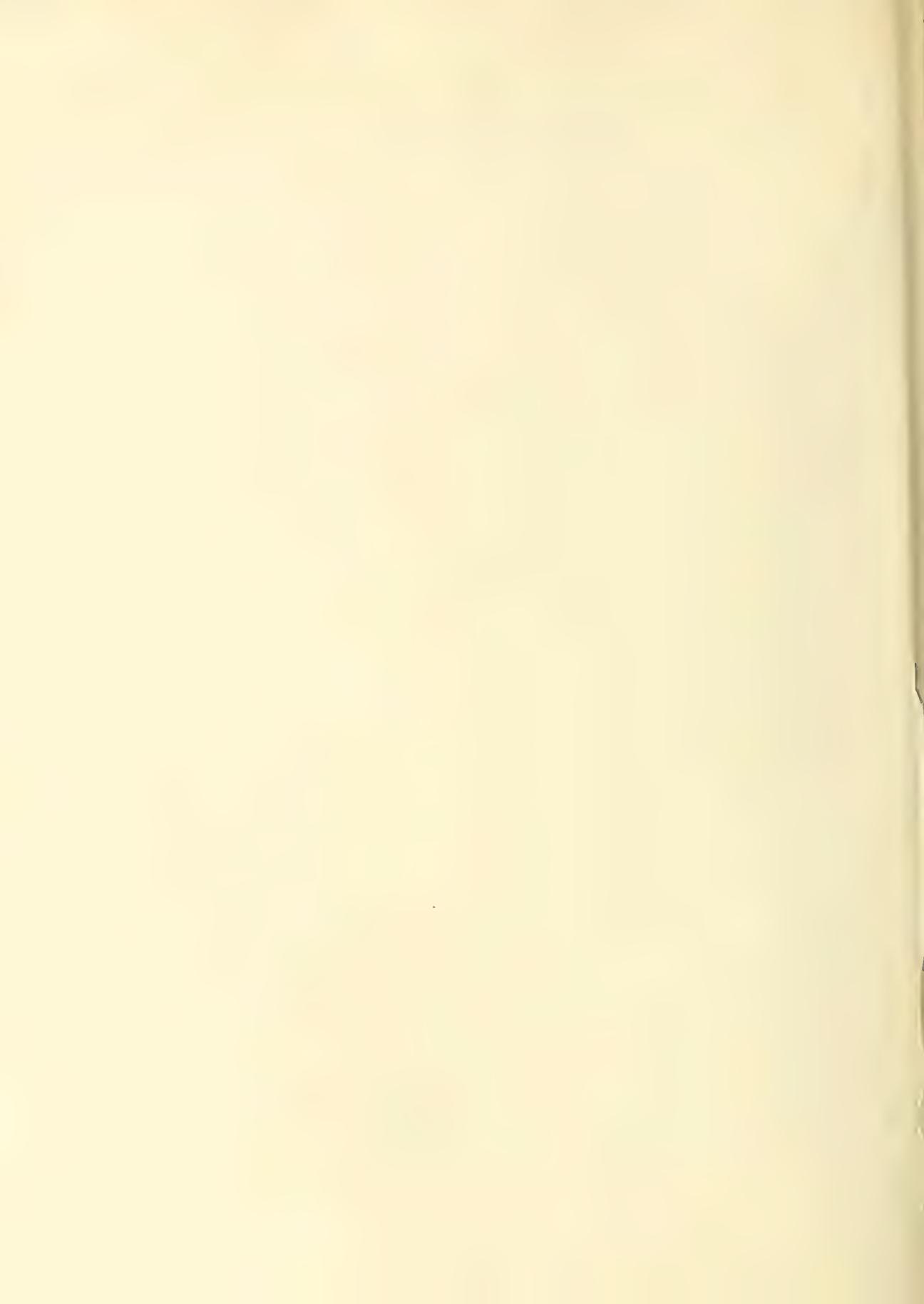
NOTE.—The study for the figure of Religious Liberty is very heavily painted, and having been rolled up with the paint inside instead of outside, the paint has cracked in several places, as can be seen in the reproduction.



















## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

Again: "He gains his end by a right adjustment of masses, by a discreet arrangement of colours as well as of forms. This is manifest at once when the observer enters the main portal on the east side of the building and is confronted by 'The Spirit of Religious Liberty,' far up on the western wall. There is no crassly fixed centre here, but the design is beautifully unified. Across the bottom of it stretches a narrow strip of deep blue sea. Narrow as it is, it has enormous weight; smoothly but irresistibly you feel the pressure of an illimitable body of water. The foam rises, subtly suggesting the deep snore of the sea itself, under the forefoot of the nearest vessel. The ocean moves, it is alive with its colour, its sound, and its sharp, salt smell. Mr. Abbey has done nothing truer or more artistic than he has done here, painting the sea as it is and at the same time making it a sort of pedestal for the intensely decorative ships that tower above it. The broad sails relieve the dark hulls with breadths of tawny red. Something of their glow faintly flushes with rose the white draperies of the three celestial guides. Back of it all is a cloudless sky, vague, opalescent spacious. Filled with the large airs of the open sea, eloquent of the wide horizons faced by the founder and his people, is this beautiful painting, a work to touch the imagination with a sense of an old hope gloriously fulfilled. And, withal, the lunette falls into its place as naturally, with as much of architectural balance, as though its component parts had been mathematically assembled.

"The same well-pondered construction marks the eastern lunette, 'Science Revealing [the] Treasures of the Earth.' The red earth itself provides the firm foundation in this case, synthetised, like the sea in the other, into a simple, broad mass. The deep fissures in it are only dimly discerned. The miners are descending warily into unknown depths and, accordingly, these are enveloped in the gloom of mystery. The practically nude bodies of the workmen are not painted in too high relief. These delvers are coming close to Mother Earth with primitive toil and their skins are subdued in colour to the stuff they work in. One is aware of them as stalwart, yet young and artless creatures, obviously the builders of a new world, eager upon the scent of discovery. Whether intentional or not, the treatment of

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

the tree-trunks behind them is singularly suggestive in view of the allegorical figures filling the upper part of the canvas on the other side. The russet-winged Goddess of Fortune in her red robe, drifting over the abyss between Abundance and Science (Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom) with their thin, floating draperies respectively of blue and white, looms against a bright sky like a phantom out of the pagan mythology. She sets the mind momentarily on thoughts of classical antiquity, and, keyed to this mood, the bare tree-trunks raise a fleeting memory of some pillared Greek temple. Between these natural columns you catch glimpses of distant blue hills. The air seems very still. The explorers work as in a breathless wonder, tense with the excitement of uncovering a precious secret in one of the silent places of the world. Both in this and in the decoration traversed above, Mr. Abbey links his design with the deeds of the men who made Pennsylvania, and generalises his theme so that it has a wider scope. He lifts his local allusion to the plane of his purpose as the collaborator of the architect.

"The northern and southern lunettes, conceived with equal imaginative grasp, are, nevertheless, designed in such wise as to bring more realistically home to us a sense of what Pennsylvania is doing to-day with the liberty sought in those red-sailed ships and with the treasures wrung from the earth. The hammer-wielding god in 'The Spirit of Vulcan' wears his scanty blue garment after the careless fashion of the Olympians and his ruddy limbs and shoulders rest appropriately in cloudy billows. But he broods over the scene less as a poetic figure than as the mentor and friend of the very human toilers beneath him. He seems, in very truth, the genius of the amazing chamber in which he finds himself, a place of giant machinery, dark, fantastic, and forbidding, of molten metal and eddying vapours, of grimy sweating men who are children of this generation, but who, at their mighty task, wear somehow, a grander, more elemental air. The management of the colour in this decoration is superb, the prevailing darkness of the machinery being relieved to just the right extent by the warm flesh tints of the smiths, the glow of the flaming steel, the pearly tones of the shifting steam and the touch of

## SCIENCE.

Fourteen feet in diameter.

"I AM WHAT IS, WHAT SHALL BE, WHAT HATH BEEN.  
MY VEIL HATH BEEN DISCLOSED BY NONE. THE FRUIT  
WHICH I HAVE BROUGHT FORTH IS THIS. THE SUN IS BORN."

(FROM A TEMPLE OF ISIS, IN EGYPT.)





THE KING IS WISEST AND THE  
WORLD HAS NO EQUAL.  
HE IS A MIGHTY RULER,  
ONE WHO IS FEARFUL.  
BOTH GODS AND MEN  
HIS HONOR.  
BO



SCIENCE REVEALING THE TREASURES OF 'THE EARTH. WITH HER SHE HAS BROUGHT FORTUNE AND ABUNDANCE.

Thirty-eight feet by twenty-two feet.

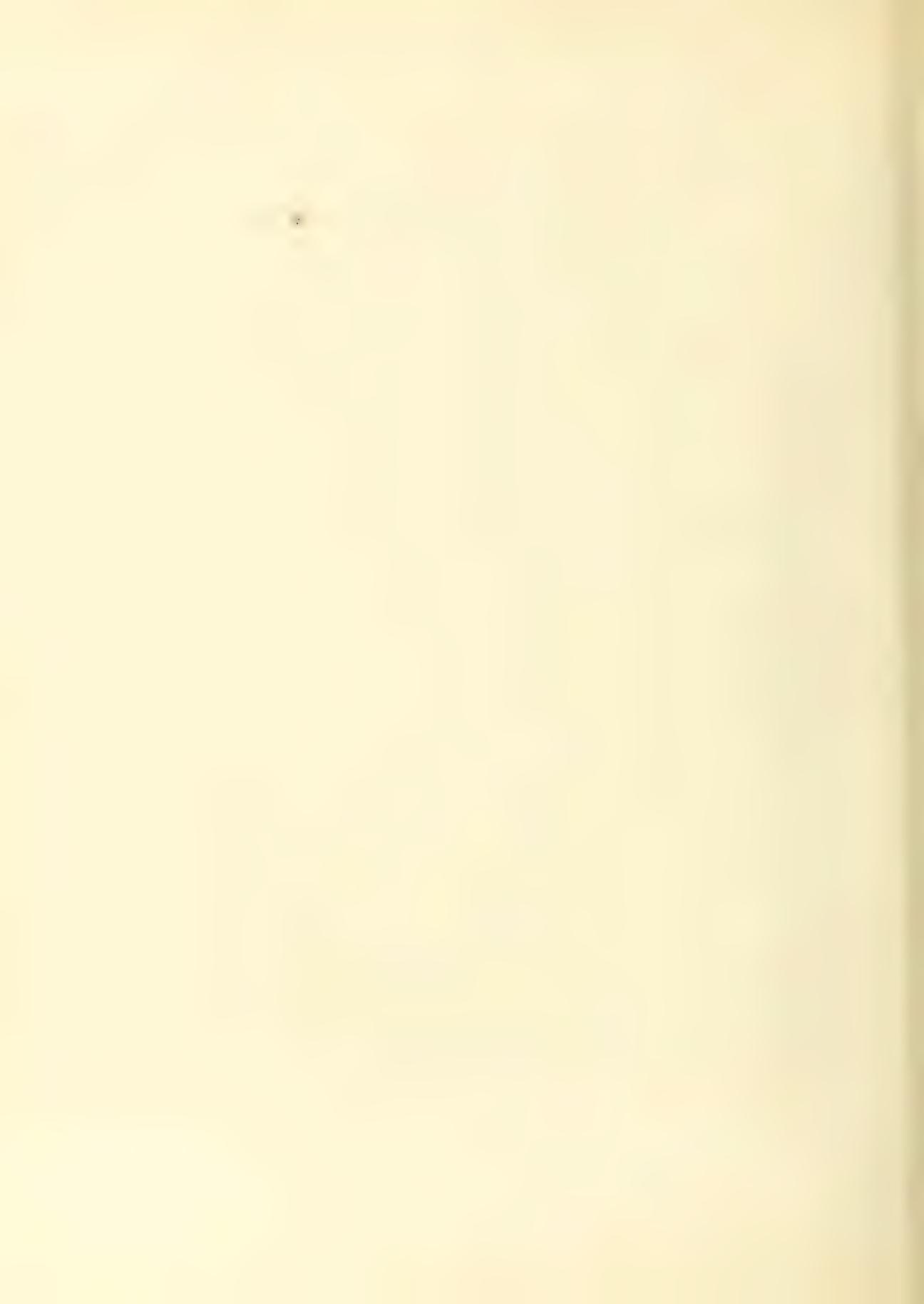
1. AN OIL STUDY OF THE THREE FIGURES—SCIENCE, FORTUNE AND ABUNDANCE.
2. A CHARCOAL STUDY OF THE MINERS CLIMBING DOWN INTO THE EARTH.















## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

lovely blue in Vulcan's tunic. But one dwells also with special appreciation on the modelling and draughtsmanship which the artist has brought to the portrayal of his figures. The linear habit proper to his illustrations made with the pen, and subsequently hinted, if not actually disclosed, in some of his paintings, is here conclusively abandoned. The figures are seen in the round and are so painted, freely and boldly, with close research into movement, the play of muscle and the swiftly changing effects of light and shade. Nor has the painter's interest in detail distracted him unduly. He fuses his details into one moving vision.

"Up to this point Mr. Abbey has worked, so to say, on safe ground. In his fourth lunette, he lets himself go in rather audacious vein. Baldly stated on paper, the idea of a company of light bearers rushing up into the air, past the prosaic timbers raised above a number of oil-wells, hardly commends itself as suitable for a great mural decoration. It all depends, of course, upon how the thing is done. Mr. Abbey does it with success by concentrating his attention upon the inherent picturesqueness of his subject. He sees that subject against a dark sky, the deep blue of which is broken by rifts of gold. With such a background the black tracery of his derricks takes on a new aspect; it is no longer prosaic but, on the contrary, positively romantic. One thinks of the tall chimneys on Thames-side which turned into *campanili* under Whistler's eyes. The derricks have something bizarre about them; beneath the shadow of those ghostly towers, almost anything might happen, and there is, after all, not audacity alone, but, in some sort, an inevitableness in the sudden upward flight of the 'Spirits of Light,' golden-haired, ivory-tinted goddesses, swathed in diaphanous blue, and coming like exhalations from the deeps. The maze of their floating figures, all softness and grace, would lose half its value against a neutral background. The needed contrast, the element to make the balance true, comes from the rigid lines of the derricks. The eye rests upon this lunette with the same contentment as upon its companions.

"If the four have, as it were, a common vitality, expressed in the same terms, their decorative integrity, as of work growing out

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

of the construction of the walls, is in part supported by the medalions in the pendentives. These unite while they divide the canvases to which they are subordinate. They are necessary members of the scheme, embracing Mr. Abbey's zone of the rotunda in one chord of colour. In them he has sought to create four episodes of design without so far emphasising them as to give them an independent existence. To this end he causes the figures to stand out against golden backgrounds so that each medallion counts vividly in the ensemble, but none of these personifications is invested with too complicated a meaning. Religion, clad in the white robe of innocence and treading underfoot the dragon of evil, stands with arms uplifted between her altar and the torch with which she passes on the sacred flame. Law, in heavy red habiliments, is blindfolded, but she, too, has conquered the enemy at her feet. In one hand she bears the scales and in the other a sword. The owl of wisdom perches on the wrist of Science, whose right hand holds the lightning. The serpent coiled beneath the hem of her garment lifts its head above her knee. Her face is veiled. Religion and Law are tall, solemn, hieratic figures. Science is made more human. She is the most beautiful of the four. Her robes are bewitching in colour, agleam with the deep greens of the emerald and the hues of a dark Egyptian scarab. . . .”

Mr. Cortissoz thus sums up his survey: “When all is said, it is, in fact, the swift, sweeping view of Mr. Abbey's decorations that imposes the severest test. How do they bear the scrutiny that takes little, if any, account of their meaning but looks simply to their organic fitness in the place in which they are fixed? They bear it triumphantly and, what is more, they will not let you neglect their meaning. That is because Mr. Abbey has perfectly balanced substance and form. His idea in each decoration is set forth with simplicity. There is no surplusage as there is no obscurity. In the same moment in which you apprehend the beauty he has put into his designs—beauty of form, colour, and composition—you realise his thought. It is important to observe, too, that he has placed his scheme in the right perspective. It is interesting to study it from the successive

ART.

Fourteen feet in diameter.

"ART DEALS WITH THINGS FOREVER INCAPABLE OF DEFINITION, AND THAT BELONG TO LOVE, BEAUTY, JOY AND WORSHIP, THE SHAPES, POWERS AND GLORY OF WHICH ARE FOREVER BUILDING, UNBUILDING AND REBUILDING IN EACH MAN'S SOUL, AND IN THE SOUL OF THE WHOLE WORLD."

PLOTINUS.







THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT.

Thirty-eight feet by twenty-two feet.

TWO OIL STUDIES.

TWO CHARCOAL STUDIES.























## MEMBER OF THE “INSTITUT”

galleries which, at the topmost stage, permit it to be pretty closely examined. But it is seen at its best from the pavement, when the beholder is thinking of no single detail in the rotunda, but surveys at a glance all that lies within his line of vision. At that moment Mr. Abbey’s decorations seem to him as necessary to the building as the giant piers around him or the floor on which he stands.”

The Pilgrims, the cordial Anglo-American confederacy, made the Imperial Institute Exhibition an occasion to give a luncheon in the painter’s honour, on May 12th. His figure of Art was used on the cover of the list of guests, and the American Ambassador, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, was well enough to preside. The speech of welcome was made by Alma Tadema, in which he described their guest as “more than anybody the pre-eminent link between America and England.” Abbey’s reply is quoted from in earlier chapters, as it had some valuable autobiographical details.

A letter to his old friend William Laffan, on May 16th, tells of another honour which had just fallen to him. “Say, I’m a corresponding member of the ‘Ansteytoo’ in place of Bompiani of Rome, who deceased last year. . . . I seem to be a good deal of a cuss.” Translated into English, this means that on May 2nd, the secretary of the Académie des Beaux Arts, Institut de France, informed Monsieur Abbey that he had been elected as a corresponding member in place of the late Robert Bompiani. Abbey was the second Philadelphian to receive this honour, Benjamin Franklin having been the first. A visit to Paris—a necessary corollary—followed, of which something was said in a letter to Mr. Napier Hemy. Among the members of the “Institut” upon whom Abbey called were MM. Merson, Bonnat, Detaille, Dagnan-Bouveret and Ferriers.

A letter to Dr. White in September shows Abbey at work on Penn’s Treaty with the Indians, for Harrisburg: “You would be interested (I hope) to see Penn. I have got the whole thing painted in—all the easy part. The nerve-exhausting buttons and finger nails—and chasing the model’s nose round the corner—and getting the action of his back before his spine sags—these are to come.” As for the tree beneath which the Indians assembled, there was, and is, on the out-

## A NORFOLK HOLIDAY

skirts of the Morgan Hall cricket field, a gigantic elm that might have grown for the purpose. Abbey adds (not too seriously) apropos of a mutual acquaintance of earlier days: "Folks develop differently sometimes from what you expect they will. But old times are old times. I'm very glad I do not fall below the expectations of any of my friends—but rather surprise them the other way. I'm sorry to say that many of my old friends do things I don't like. I don't see how they can—but they do."

A letter to Walter James on October 6th tells of a little holiday—the only one that Abbey was able to take this year, which also had no cricket for him. "Last week we motored over to the Norfolk coast—by way of Brackley, Cambridge, Bury St. Edmunds, and Norwich—stopping nights at Cambridge and Norwich. Then to Cromer and along the coast to Stiffkey.... It is a wonderful country for skies and air and things—wonderful old churches, and splendid subjects. We had a glorious day on the beach at Salthouse—nothing in sight but sea and sky and shingle—and nobody within miles save ourselves. I believe the shooting is splendid. I saw more partridges than I knew existed—and on the marshes there were hundreds of wild birds. I'd like to go up there and paint—before I die. I wonder if you know it at all.

"We left with regret by way of Wells along more coast to King's Lynn, and thence to Ely across Fens—splendid—I never saw anything finer than Ely as we came to it in the evening light. We shall do this again one day. The old car went splendidly—and didn't swallow as much petrol as usual owing to the absence of hills.... This north coast of Norfolk is said to be the place Germany intends to make a landing upon. In these days of aeroplanes and balloons it won't be so easy to do it unbeknownst..."

"My own work has got on pretty well. I've one big one all rubbed in—'Penn's Treaty with the Ingins'—24 feet high, but, (thank God!) narrow." It was 12 feet wide.

The military figures in the great Apotheosis decoration, together with such accoutrements as might be needed for "The Battle of Gettysburg," a war picture, to follow, were now engaging Abbey's

LAW.

Fourteen feet in diameter.

"JUSTICE IS THE END OF GOVERNMENT. IT IS THE END OF CIVIL SOCIETY. IT EVER HAS BEEN, EVER WILL BE PURSUED UNTIL IT BE OBTAINED OR UNTIL LIBERTY BE LOST IN THE PURSUIT."

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.





THE MEANING OF GOVERNMENT IS IN THE  
IDEAS WHICH IT PRACTICALLY LIVES BY.  
EVERYTHING WHICH HAS BEEN  
WON FOR FREEDOM AND LIBERTY HAS BEEN  
CRWN'D WITH A CROWN OF THORNS.  
BELOW THE EAGLE'S FEET THE SIGHT



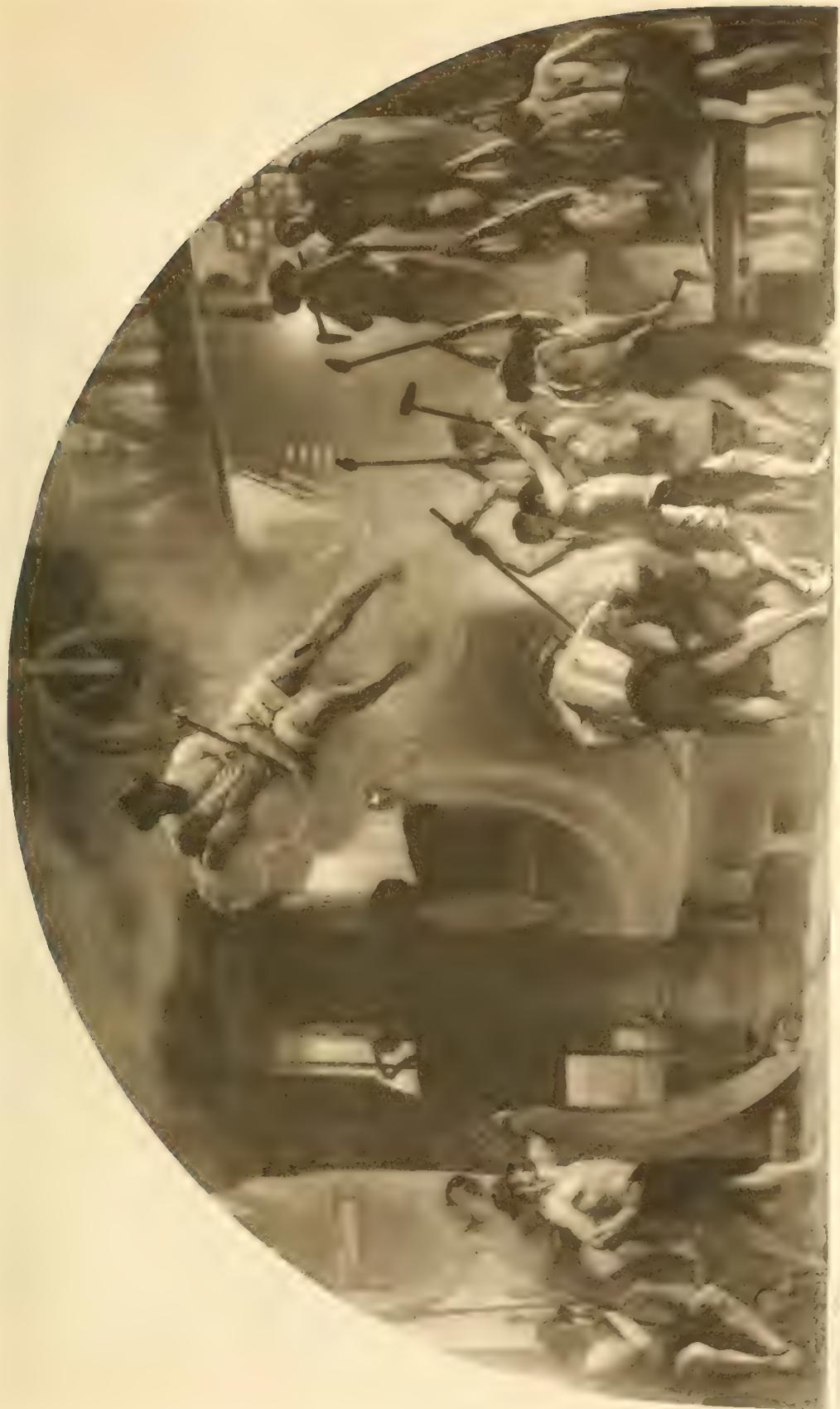
THE SPIRIT OF VULCAN, THE GENIUS OF THE WORKERS IN IRON AND STEEL.

Thirty-eight feet by twenty-two feet.

1. AN OIL STUDY.

2. A CHARCOAL STUDY.















## THE HOUSE OF LORDS PANELS

attention, and he asked the assistance of Mr. Shelton, of the Salma-gundi Club, to procure catalogues and to order certain costumes for him. Here is a letter on the subject: "I don't think I'll get a cannon. Detaille has two or three in his backyard—but I don't think I can get enough juice out of one to warrant importing it. I might, of course, take it off the carriage and use it for a rolling pin to roll the lawn with. Thank you for offering to lend me your coat—or is the coat you got me an artillery coat? Isn't red braid artillery? I remember cavalry (don't I?) with yellow braid on the seams and collar. Bridles—I wonder if I ought to have a bridle? They look very different in the catalogue from anything I see here. I should have to get in a horse or two—as I have only Jersey cows and dogs, and an automobile and some wheel-barrows."

Another task begun in 1908 was the supervision by Abbey of a series of six decorative historical paintings for the House of Lords. He settled the horizon line, the scale of the figures and watched over the harmony of the colour scheme and thus secured the needful unity among the six artists who were to paint them. They were, as we shall see, completed and set in place in October, 1910.

One of the Jersey cows reappears in the last letter of the year to Dr. White: "I'm sorry to have to report that Priscilla has lost her horns. She had a difference with one of her aunts—and this is the result. It should be a lesson to all of us. She has had her hair dyed with coal tar—an excellent substitute and picturesque. Otherwise we are very well. Eighty-nine children vociferated carols in the hall last night—and carted away

89 oranges, 89 pence, and 89 rock cakes.

"I wish we could get away to the southern sun pretty soon. I am feeling tired—and a change would do G. no end of good. I don't find that many folk care for this kind of weather save fox-hunters—the land is, of course, alive with *these*."

In 1907 and 1908 Harpers' published the drawings to *Henry IV*—all except one in colour, and all done with reference to reproduction in that medium; *Troilus and Cressida*, two in colour and one in pen-and-ink; *Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus*.

## CHAPTER XLI

### “THE GROVE OF ACADEME” AND “VALLEY FORGE”

1909-1910 Aged 56-58

E. H. Blashfield—John Hay’s Letters—A New Commission—A Visit to Greece—Completion of the Tragedies—W. Q. Orchardson—Henry James on Norfolk—The House of Lords Panels—Death of Old Friends—The 1910 Academy—Valley Forge—Winslow Homer’s Death—The Harrisburg Capitol—The Completion of “The Reading of the Declaration of Independence”

**B**Y 1909 Abbey’s first eight designs for Harrisburg were in their place in the collar of the dome; the four lunettes and the circular canvases in the four pendentives. To follow were the ceiling—an imaginative presentment of the twenty-four hours—and the historical paintings, all for the House of Representatives, and, also, to follow, the paintings for the Senate and for the Supreme Court.

An early letter of the year—from Mr. E. H. Blashfield, the American decorative painter—is here quoted in full:

“New York,  
“MY DEAR ABBEY,  
“January 7th, 1909.

“I went to Harrisburg a week ago to see your decorations and was *delighted*. The whole cycle impressed me, but the men going down into the earth with the floating goddesses at their side were *superb* as a decoration. So was the canvas with the very nobly conceived idea of ‘Religious Liberty.’

“The figures in the pendentives seemed to me just a bit small in scale though beautiful intrinsically.

“I think I understand your point of view (which is mine also), that of a dread of making your figures in different scales in one set of decorations. Take it altogether my visit heartened me up a lot, for I am more interested in the development of mural painting in America than in anything else under the sun, and a big idea carried out in a

## THE RULE OF THUMB

big way, as yours is, is such a lift and help to us all that you ought to be thanked.

“With regards to Mrs. Abbey.

“I am yours very sincerely,

“EDWIN HOWLAND BLASHFIELD.”

Abbey’s reply is interesting: “I cannot tell you how greatly I appreciate your having gone all the way to Harrisburg to look at my things. I note what you say about the figures in the pendentives. I had my doubts about them, and really, at first, made sketches of seated figures as filling up the circles better; but I thought, after I put a small scale model together, that standing figures carried the line of the figures in the lunettes *round* better. I dare say they are so far apart that this refinement is not noticeable. What a job it is, always! We learn all the things we ought to know to begin with—just when we are ready to step down and out. There seem to be no rules that I have ever been able to come upon as to scale or proportion. ‘If a thing looks right it is right’—this is a rule of thumb, but it is about the only rule I know.”

In January of this year the Royal Academy was again suffering a critical attack. Writing to Walter James, Abbey says: “I sometimes wonder when I read some of these young art critics’ effusions, whether we *are* all wrong, and that mere ‘good paint’—no matter what it is supposed to indicate—is the only thing in the world. I’m too old to change—and I still admire the handling that expresses something of the forms and colour of what the painter is looking at. If it is conscious ‘good paint’ it is like conscious fine writing—and empty rhetoric so far as I’m concerned. However, I don’t want to preach, God knows! I’ve just been looking through John Hay’s letters—three vols., which Mrs. Hay has just sent us. The great charm of them is that he don’t preach.”

At the end of January, the Abbeys started for Athens on a little expedition for the reasons for which we must go back to 1908, when, on the 31st of July, Mr. Edward Bok, of the Curtis Publishing Company, Philadelphia, had written to the artist telling him that this company was about to erect a nine-storey building to be entirely

## A NEW COMMISSION

devoted to the uses of their business; that, facing Independence Square, its architecture was to harmonise with that of the old State House, to be Colonial as far as a nine-storey building would permit, and, like it, was to be of dull red brick with white marble facings, and that it would take about two years and a half to put up the building. He enclosed a plan of the proposed main floor, on which was shown, facing the principal entrance, a large wall space, and said that his company had agreed that he should approach Abbey with the idea of asking him if he would accept a commission to paint for them this wall space; that if he would consider doing this piece of work for the Curtis Company he was sure that they could easily come to a comfortable working understanding on the question of a single panel or a division of the space into plural panels, as well as on the question of the subject of the painting and the price. He concluded his letter as follows: "Of course, I am exceedingly hopeful that you may be attracted to the idea of doing this work for us. It has always been a matter of personal regret to me that there should be no important representation of your work in Philadelphia of all cities. This seems to me to be an opportunity, and I am hoping that you may consider it favourably."

Abbey replied at once saying that, although he was at the time fully occupied upon the Harrisburg work, he liked the idea of doing something for a building in his native city, but that he would prefer a single panel. He would, he said, be at Fairford during September. The result was that Mr. Bok, accompanied by Mr. Edgar V. Seeler, the architect of the new Curtis Building, left America on September 16th, and was at Morgan Hall on the 23rd. In a few hours all was settled. A design for "The Grove of Academe," painted in oils years before on a wooden panel, was chosen from among several others, and when Abbey had touched it up a little, Mr. Bok carried it home to Philadelphia to display it to the other members of the Curtis Publishing Company. The painting was to be a single panel, 50 feet by 13 feet. The price agreed upon, without any discussion, was 50,000 dollars, and it was understood that although, for a change of work, Abbey might go to Greece and make a few studies there,

## IMPRESSIONS OF GREECE

he could not set up the big canvas until the paintings for the Harrisburg House of Representatives were completed. All this happened in 1908, and now, in January, 1909, Abbey found himself sufficiently advanced with the Harrisburg work to be able to visit Athens and make a few studies for the panel for Philadelphia.

We find some notes on the Greek adventure in a letter to Dr. White in March: "Grease is wonderful—a beautiful place—with no drawbacks save the getting about, which is slow, and in cold weather uncomfortable, and perhaps, in out-of-the-way places, the beds. These latter were invented by the Spartans, I dare say. We went to Athens—stayed there a couple of weeks—then had a dragoman (Constantine Œconomides by name) who escorted us to Corinth, Nauplia for Epidaurus, Mycenæ, Tiryns, Delphi, Olympia, etc.—and did it all well. Then we spent a week at Corfu—and after that home by way of Brindisi, P.&O. Express. The entire distance through the length of Italy and France through snow—I hope an unique experience....

"They are a nice, gentle-voiced people—the Greeks—and the women are many of them very handsome. We went to a couple of balls on the last Sunday we were in Athens. One, a children's fancy-dress ball—at Mme. Schliemann's daughter's house—and another when the Royal Family took a hand in the festal scene. It struck me as a very cheery way of spending the Sabbath. The people nearly all have black hair in Greece. I think they come by it honestly."

"Constantine Œconomides's contract for an eight-days' trip lies before me. It runs thus, in his bold handwriting:

“1st day.—Leave Athens 6.30 a.m. for Mycenæ, Argos and Tiryns and sleep at Nauplia.

“2nd day.—Excursion to Epidaurus and back to Nauplia.

“3rd day.—Leave Nauplia 8.45 a.m. for Corinth, visit old Corinth.

“4th day.—By S. Ship to Itea *via* Canal of Corinth.

“5th day.—Drive to Delphi and back to Itea for sleep.

“6th day.—By S. Ship from Itea to Patras.

“7th day.—Leave Patras for Olympia; sleep there.

## LAST SHAKESPEARE DRAWING

“‘8th day.—From Olympia to Patras. Dinner at Patras and take steamer for Corfu.

“‘CONST. ŒCONOMIDES.

“‘Dragoman at the Hotel Gde. Bretagne, Athens.”

Abbey did not live to complete the Greek subject, but he had great hopes of it and came to the task with all his enthusiasm.

In 1909 he had nothing at the Academy; but he was represented in *Harper's* more copiously than ever before, since he began on Shakespeare, drawings for no fewer than six of the Tragedies being given during the twelve months. The postscript of a letter to Mr. Spielmann on May 5th, 1909, is momentous: “Just finished the very last Shakespeare drawing. Began them twenty years ago!” This was that of Cleopatra saying to Antony, “Sooth, Ia, I'll help: thus it must be”—published in *Harper's* for September of the same year. The series of illustrations to the Tragedies now brought to a close had, as we remember, begun in the magazine with *King Lear*, in 1902, and it came to an end in 1909 with *Titus Andronicus*. There were seventy-one drawings in all as against one hundred and thirty-three for the Comedies, and now, after a delay of eleven years, the original agreement with Messrs. Harper and Bros., that the Tragedies and Histories should be issued in an edition uniform with the Comedies, is to be carried out by them.

In the summer the portrait of Abbey, by Orchardson, which serves as the frontispiece to this volume, was begun and finished as it remains. Although Orchardson was growing feeble in health, his hand retained its power, and the picture is a beautiful one. Mrs. Abbey considers it a most satisfactory likeness.\* It was exhibited in the Academy in 1910, but its painter was not alive to see it. The President, Sir Edward Poynter, in his speech at the Royal Academy Banquet, on April 10th, 1910, referring to the death of Orchardson and to this portrait, said: “He worked bravely till within a few days of his death, and, though suffering much during the last few years of his life, his work never fell off, and I think that the portrait of his

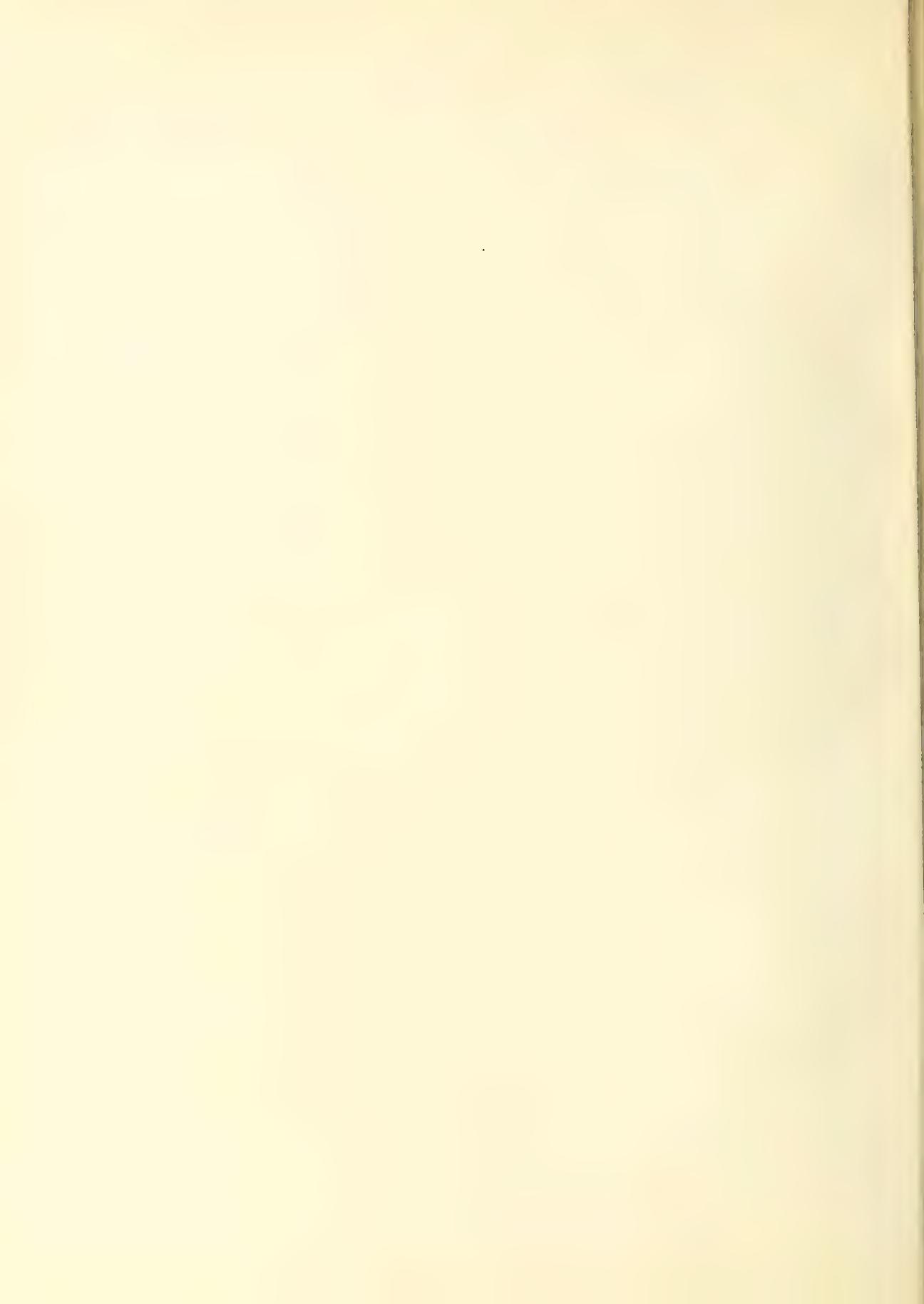
\* Her only criticisms are that his hair is not dark enough, and that there is a suggestion in the face that Abbey was a burlier man than in reality.

A STUDY FOR "THE GROVE OF ACADEME."

1910.







## W. Q. ORCHARDSON

friend and fellow-member, which is in the present exhibition, will stand as one of the best portraits he ever produced." The hands and objects on the table were left unfinished, but the signature, incorrectly spelled, was his last stroke of work, done a day or two before his death.

The rest of the year was given to work for Harrisburg, the principal task being the circular ceiling and the panel representing the Apotheosis of Pennsylvania, which meant enormous labour both of research and arrangement. For recreation we find the record of one cricket match, against an Eleven of Musicians, but no runs from Abbey's bat; and meanwhile the motor car was being more than useful in providing distraction. In September Henry James thus refers to it in a letter to Mrs. Abbey. "The idea of your new noiseless Daimler solicits me more powerfully than I can say, and do—oh, *do!* —take me two or three such interesting spins as all your country makes possible! . . . Pardon my greedy frankness; it isn't that I love—and—less, but that I love you and Daimler (with Ned squeezed in between us) more!"

In October, after attending the opening of Harvard House, America's gift to Stratford-on-Avon, the Abbeys went on a brief motoring tour to Northumberland to stay with Walter James, making a stop here and there to see a cathedral, the Roman Wall, or other object of interest. Henry James, who chanced at the same time to be in Norfolk, records some of his impressions in a letter written on his return to Rye, on October 12th: "Overstrand is a sort of miniature Norfolk Newport, with a group of people who see each other constantly all winter . . . dining, tea-ing, lunching, or chattering again with the utmost fury; but the Norfolk country all new to me, full of character and strength, and Norwich Cathedral a much finer thing than I had supposed. I was struck with the boundless *wealth* of everyone . . . and altogether came home after a week further in London, seeing the irrepressible and so much buying compatriot 'off' again at Euston, etc., very much chastened and bewildered. I am hoping you will have had a lovely Northumberland time. The quality or colour of the season on this soft South Coast is adorable

## "THE HOURS"

—in the interstices of the rain. But I cherish tenderly your beautiful brickless land of ‘polenta’ yellows.” And on November 12th he writes, “I had a delightful letter from you on your return from your visit to the Walter James’s, which made me envy you and Gertrude consumedly, in respect especially to all the northward motor-run preceding it, preceding, I mean, your stay with those so pleasant people in those so wondrous wilds . . . and yet I didn’t immediately thank you for your so vivid picture of it all, so as not to have the air of giving you tit for tat, in order to obtain from you tat for tit! . . . I see your monument [referring to Harrisburg work] more and more bristle and flash, more and more splendidly flourish. It will be a very great creation, only so damnably exported and expatriated; for it’s the history not at all of “Penna,” but of dear old Morgan Hall . . . still let me follow *there*, won’t you?”

Writing to Walter James in November, Abbey says that he has a model and is “doing ladies with nothing on from her. But it isn’t well to do nudes in the winter. Flesh is better to look at—and even to go about in—when it is warmer. It’s pearlier and more delicate.” (The ladies were “*The Hours.*”) Referring to a new book on painters, by a critic, he adds: “I dare say if these art writers knew more about what they write about they wouldn’t write. No matter what—I shall stick to what I set out to do, in spite of fashion. I *must* see how my way is coming out. Perhaps it has come out already—and that there is nothing else left—but I see miles farther than I can do, and if I ever learn to refine what I have laboriously learned and unlearned I shall be content. I shall have to be, I suppose. We usually know how we should have played the ball that got us out—after the event.

“I hear that J.S.S[argent] did some beautiful things in Corfu. It is a wonderful place when the weather is all right—and even when it is not. I must have another go at it before I get at this Plato picture (‘The Grove of Academe’). If only I could get the hang of these olive trees, which are beautiful but exasperating when it comes to the leaves. They seem to have had plane trees about in Plato’s time, but I didn’t see a plane tree, to know it, in all Greece.”

## HOUSE OF LORDS PANELS

Again, to the same correspondent, on December 1st: "I've got Simmonds here helping me a bit—and vast canvi yawning at me—and I make drawings and drawings and drawings"; and a fortnight later: "We went up to town last week for some R.A. meetings—my last weeks of the Council. I went to see Eden's panel for the House of Lords, which is extremely interesting—and I think will be satisfactory. It doesn't seem right for the gentlemen who have been selling their pictures for hundreds of thousands to do nothing whatever for the artists of their own day... They are pretty well strangling production. I believe — sold a picture from his collection for £80,000, but I have not heard of his spending any of this to help produce more things. My people are a little more generous than this." Mr. Eden's House of Lords panel represented "The Expansion of England." The others, each of which was presented by a peer [at £400 each], and which were all in progress, represented "The New Learning," by Mr. Cadogan Cowper; "The Roman Catholic Reaction," by Mr. Byam Shaw; "Henry VIII.'s Break with Rome," by Mr. Frank O. Salisbury; "The Reformation," by Mr. Ernest Board; and "The Origin of Parties," by Mr. Henry A. Paine.

Lord Carlisle, himself an amateur painter, and the donor of Mr. Cowper's House of Lords panel, who died in 1910, had for a number of years been seeing a great deal of Abbey, often spending hours at a time in his studio. They corresponded when not in town, and during the progress of the House of Lords panels many letters passed between them which would have been of value to this biography, but which unfortunately are not available, although Lord Carlisle preserved his letters.

Mr. Cadogan Cowper, continuing the reminiscences of Abbey from which quotations were made in an earlier chapter, writes of these panels: "I did not actually see a very great deal of him after I left Fairford in 1903—because he and Mrs. Abbey always lived for the greater part of the year in the country. But I always sought his advice with my work whenever he was in town and I could get it. And in the years 1909–1910 I had a good deal of correspond-

## HOUSE OF LORDS PANELS

ence with him—and then I saw him rather more often—about the set of six historical mural paintings for the East Corridor of the Central Hall in the Houses of Parliament. . . . We were chosen for this work because our styles of painting were similar to some extent and likely to harmonise, and because the general scheme was to be Gothic, and we had each of us studied Gothic things. Abbey was asked to superintend the whole work because of his experience as a mural decorator on a big scale and because of his great knowledge of anything Gothic, and to ensure that there should be complete uniformity and artistic harmony in the carrying out of the scheme. . . . It was the greatest advantage to us to have his advice and controlling hand. Without him the six paintings would never have been so thoroughly in keeping as they are.

"It was a bitter disappointment to us that the Office of Works would not allow the architectural mouldings and ornamentations of the corridor to be gilded and painted to complete the Gothic scheme of decoration of the whole. We wanted that little corridor to look like a richly gilded and painted and mediæval casket or shrine, of which the historical wall paintings were intended to be part of the decoration. And we did not like their insisting that glass must be fixed over our paintings, thus treating them as if they were easel pictures, which they are not intended to be. But whenever we protested the authorities pointed to the precedent of the other corridors which have paintings, and said that ours must be like that—in spite of the fact that our paintings were totally different in style, and were done with a view to an entirely different scheme of decoration. Even the bad lettering in use for the titles of the pictures in the other corridors they insisted upon repeating in our corridor under our paintings, in spite of our protests, simply for the sake of precedent and because this bad lettering was used in the other corridors.

"But the general success of the paintings as they stand is due to the untiring trouble which Abbey took with the whole matter. *He hoped it would be the beginning of a revival of interest in mural painting in England*, which always does such an immense amount of good to the art of a country."

## TREVELYAN'S "AMERICAN REVOLUTION"

In December came a very characteristic letter from Henry James concerning Sir George Trevelyan's *American Revolution*, which Abbey had been reading with delight, although he did not begin it until his painting of "Valley Forge" and all the details therein had been completed: "I am very much interested in your interest in Trevelyan, which I rejoice to have put you more urgently on reading. I did so, from volume to volume, with real emotion, and he held me breathless and intent 'right along.' He is very flattering to *us* (he is judged to be much too much so here) and is not the success with this public, naturally, that he has been with ours—though one feels, I think, all sorts of deflections and misappreciations in him (and all *favourable* to us), which arise from his having done the whole thing with no *personal* knowledge of the country. The book is a most curious document of the old Whigs and C. J. Fox tradition—which plays down, through the long years, so remarkably straight into it, and so colours and animates and *unifies* it (in feeling, tone, effect, etc.). But it is indeed thrilling, the subject of the first order—and beautifully, admirably done, in the fine old 'literary history' and slightly unmodern way. What it mainly suggests to *us*, I think, is—1st, what damned disagreeable and thankless people we were to work and suffer for; 2nd, what an amazing miracle that we really pulled it off after all; and 3rd, what a regular duck of a dear G. W. was, or must have been, and *quite* capable of having been charming about the cherry tree. If only modern dentistry had been invented in his day there wouldn't have been a blot upon his image. But to have gone down handsomely to the ages with *such* dentistry shows how much else there was of him."

One more letter of the year, telling Dr. White of hard work: "There are," writes Abbey, "no holidays in my trade. It is always in the back of one's head, no matter what one is doing. I am losing tie after tie with America. Two of my oldest friends died recently—Gilder and Laffan. I had known Gilder since '73—and had seen a good deal of him at times—but Laffan was one of my most intimate and dearest friends, and makes a great vacancy in my life. We had many early schemes in common—some came off and some didn't—but he was

## DEATH OF McKIM

always there—just where I had left him last. McKim's death was a happy release. I hadn't seen him for a long time—but he did great work for his time—his steady, quiet, persistent striving for all that was the highest and best in his profession—and the extraordinary number and ability of the men who worked under him, amazing. Of course, if one has found out something—or learned something of one's calling in life—it is a great pleasure as one gets older to hand the results of one's experience on to the coming chaps. It is a duty—but a good many men ignore that." These three men—Gilder, aged 65, Laffan, 61, and McKim, 62—all died within two months. In a letter to Mr. Blashfield a day or so before that quoted above Abbey says: "What a year of losses it has been! I can't think of America without thinking of the empty places."

The work of 1910 was almost wholly for Harrisburg; but Abbey turned now and then to a new picture, begun on a smaller canvas in 1906, "The Three Marys," which, however, was never finished, and at times painted upon his design for "The Grove of Academe," and made a number of studies.

After being absent from the Academy's walls for too long, he made a reappearance in this year with "Penn's Treaty with the Indians," and the great snow scene, "The Camp of the American Army at Valley Forge, February, 1778," both painted for Harrisburg. The "Valley Forge" painting, to which in the catalogue was appended these lines from Tennyson:

Strong Mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee !

depicted a deeply interesting moment in the history of America, when Baron von Steuben, one of Frederick the Great's generals, and a veteran of the Seven Years War, who had come to America and put his services at the disposal of Washington in the fight for liberty, undertook to drill raw recruits for new efforts. Washington's army, defeated at the Brandywine and at Germantown, was undergoing hardships at Valley Forge, during a terrible winter of suffering.

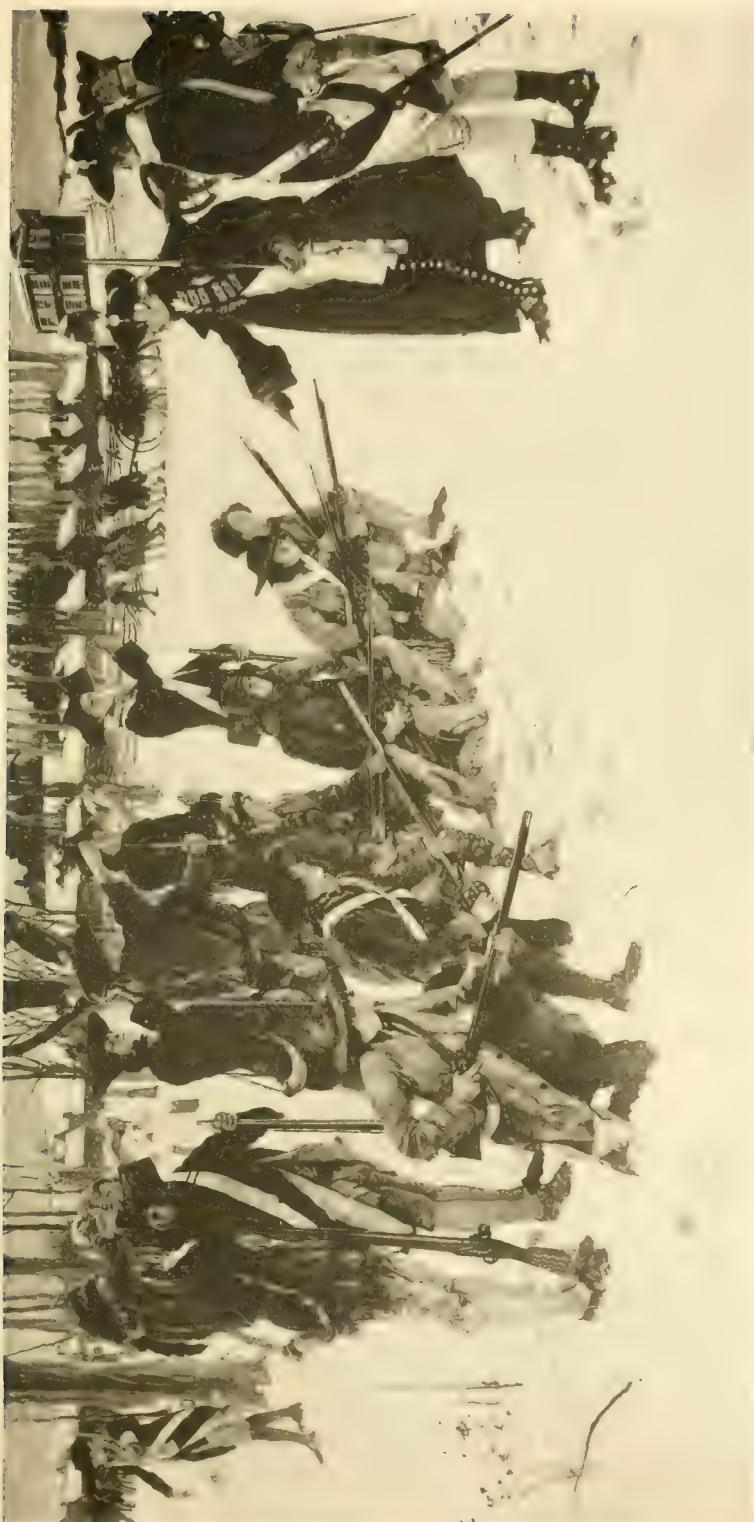
THE CAMP OF THE AMERICAN ARMY AT VALLEY FORGE, FEBRUARY, 1778.

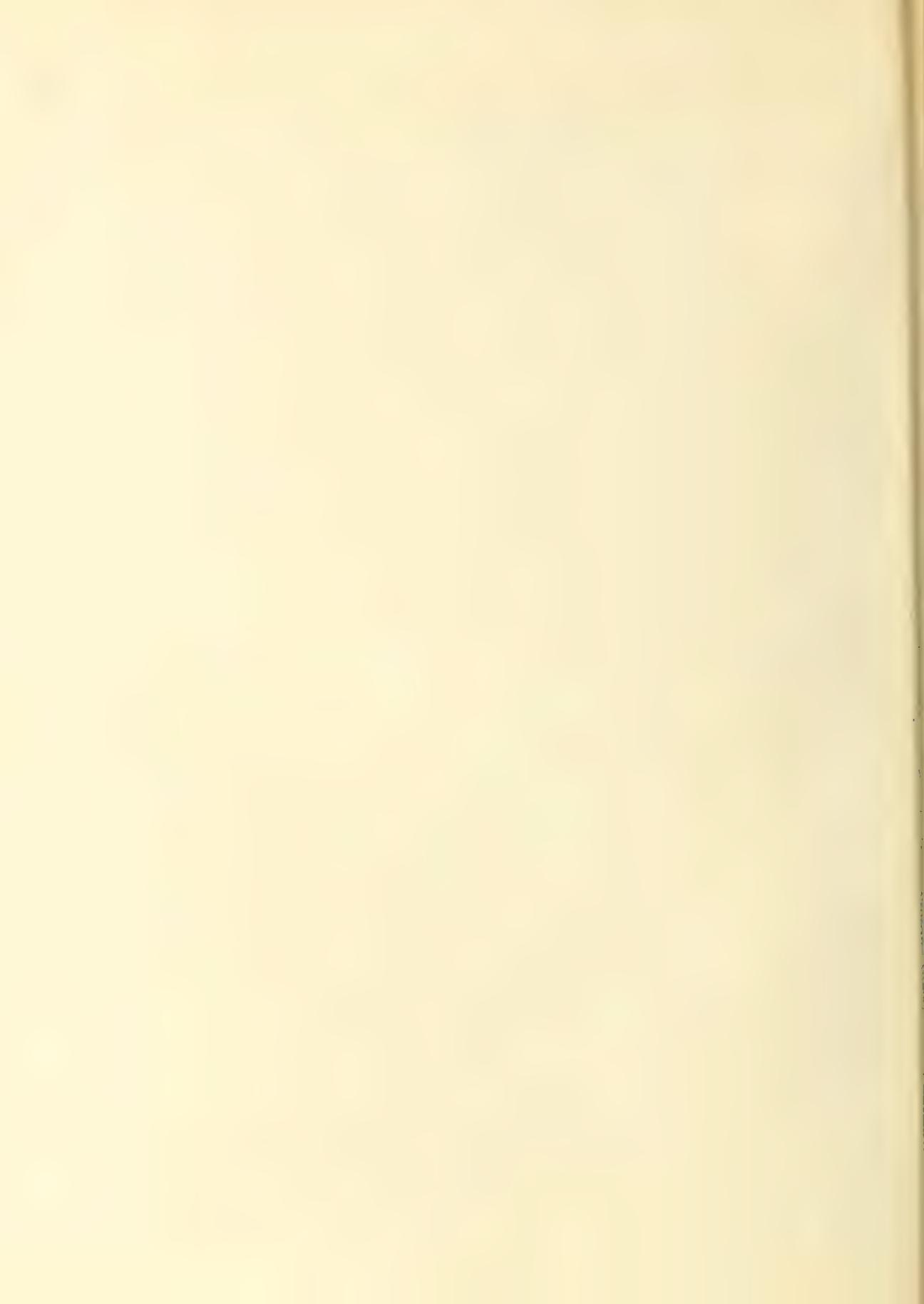
Twelve feet six inches by six feet.

1909-1910.

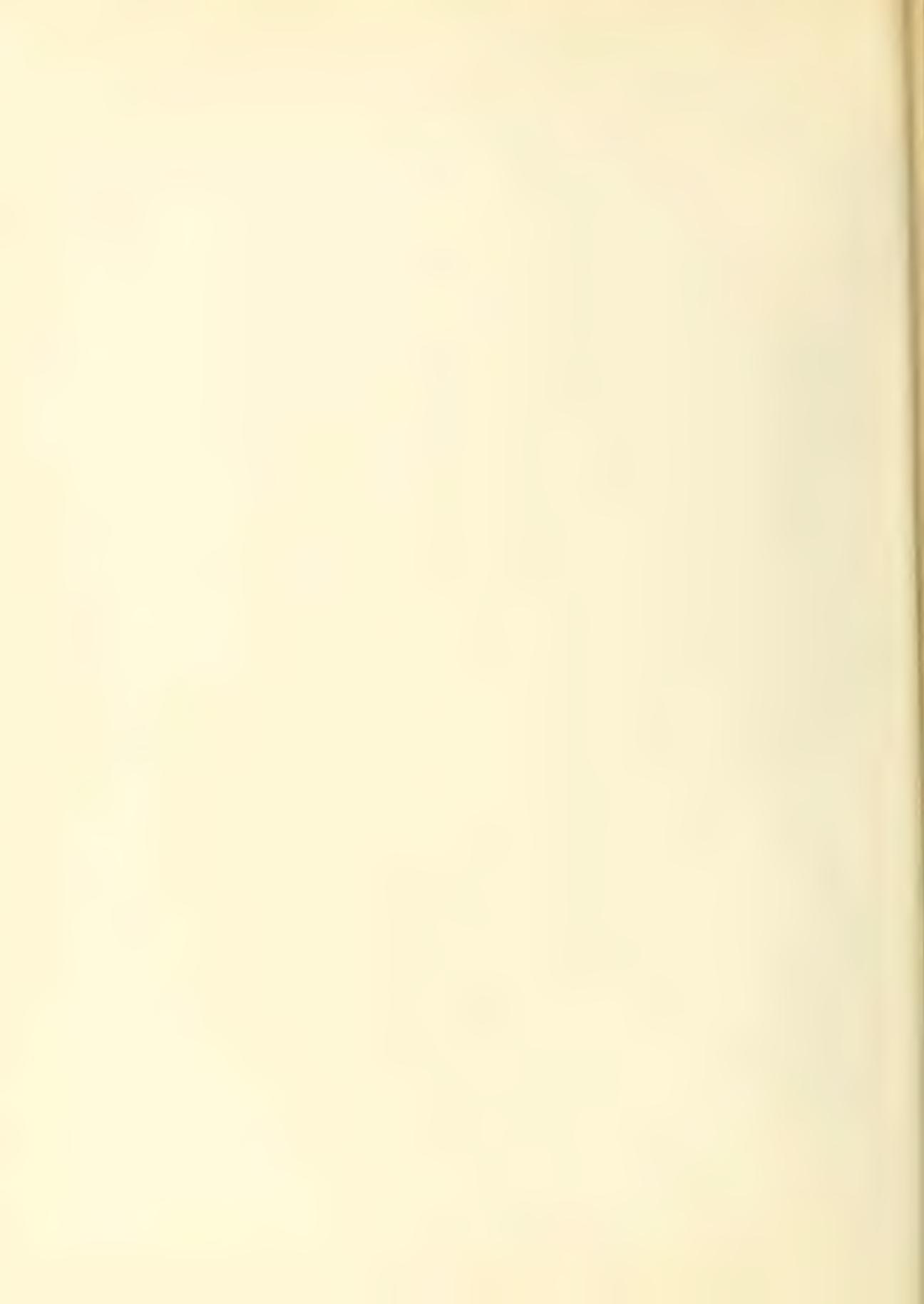
TWO CHARCOAL STUDIES.





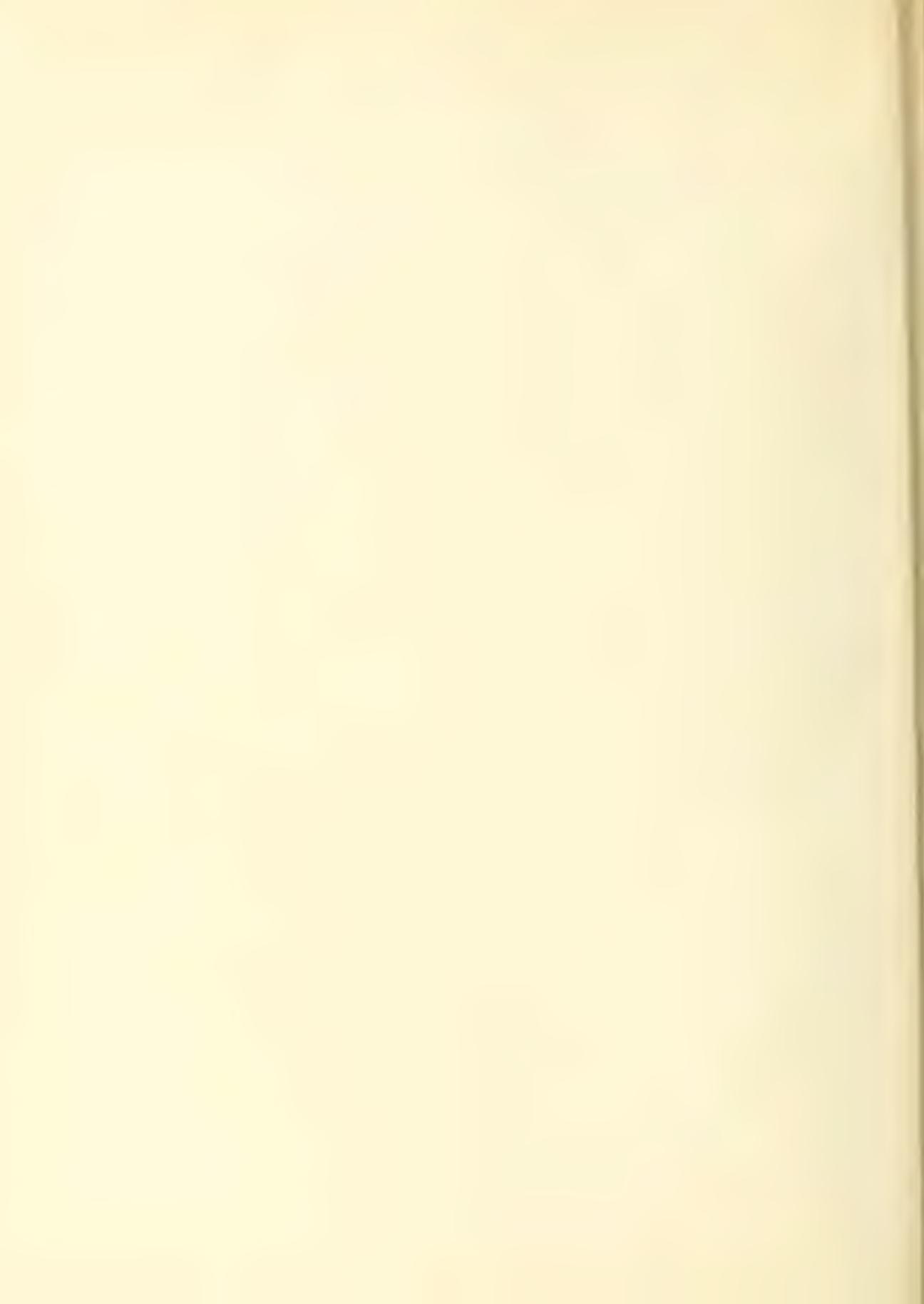






5





## THE "VALLEY FORGE"

when soldiers tramped barefoot over the bleak hill and yoked themselves to rough boxes when they had wood or stores to distribute among the huts. "The training of small squads [wrote one of the critics of the picture], which von Steuben conducted musket in hand, was the beginning of a thorough system of reorganisation. The awkward squad on the snowbound Campus Martius contains the promise of the potency of the American Commonwealth. It sums up the agonising winter of discontent with lucidity and comprehension. Valley Forge stands for the discipline of adversity, for sufferings endured with fortitude and uncomplaining patience, and Mr. Abbey has nobly expressed the spirit of the famous camp."

The late Sir Edward Poynter told me that he considered the "Valley Forge" one of the most beautifully painted pictures ever hung in the Academy in his time; while at the Academy banquet of 1912, the first after Abbey's death, he said: "I have little hesitation in saying that that picture, his masterpiece in my opinion, if pathos, vivid truth to nature and masterly execution go to the making of a great work, combined in an unusual degree all the qualities which are essential to the production of a truly great work of art."

Abbey had planned to paint for the Senate Chamber "The Battle of Gettysburg," a companion to the "Valley Forge," but he did not live to do so. Later on the "Valley Forge" painting was removed—although in defiance of the artist's scheme—from the wall of the Senate Chamber, to which it had been fixed and for which it was planned and executed, to a position in the House of Representatives. It is to be hoped that no injury was done to it.

"To-day," Tadema wrote on August 6th, "the last of the R.A. Exhibition, we could not help . . . paying a farewell visit . . . and we were well rewarded, for it was a real treat to look into your snow picture and all its beauties, so I cannot help writing and telling you of it. . . . Of course we enjoyed the big tree and Penn and the men decorated with pens, but it did not warm me up so much as the winter scene did."

On May 28th, 1910, Abbey played for the Artists against Architects at Beckley, but did not bat. So far as the records of the A.C.C. go, this was his last match.

## WINSLOW HOMER'S DEATH

In spite of his many obligations he took a holiday at St. Moritz in August and was noticeably well, as he was all through the following winter until February. While at St. Moritz he met his old painter friend Gedney Bunce (who died in 1917), and wrote of him: "He told me he was seventy—but he has looked like that for thirty years." On returning home in August, he began to motor regularly each week to Woodcote to watch progress, the removal from Morgan Hall being timed for early in the following year.

Writing to Walter James in October he says of Harrisburg: "The big ceiling is approaching completion (unberufen!). I've used several tons of costly blue paint on it—painted it all in the mat colours. I should think you could use these well. Their great pull is their luminosity, and as there is no oil in them to get yellow—only wax—I don't see why they should not stay luminous....

"We went to Letchworth to look at the cottages—as we are having to build some. In the course of a number of years Letchworth may be an attractive spot—at present not so. But the cottages are well designed and the scheme is good. I drivel on and say nothing—so I will now cease."

A letter to Mr. Blashfield on October 28th says that there is hope of finishing the ceiling before Christmas. The writer continues: "They keep dropping off—our old friends. Since I was in America, dozens of them. I think Homer [Winslow] a great loss. I began to admire him when I saw his things in *Our Young Folks* and *Harper's Weekly*—ages ago. I wonder if you remember a drawing in *Harper's Weekly* of a Sharpshooter in a pine tree—and a double page of a camp-fire with a soldier dancing a break-down."

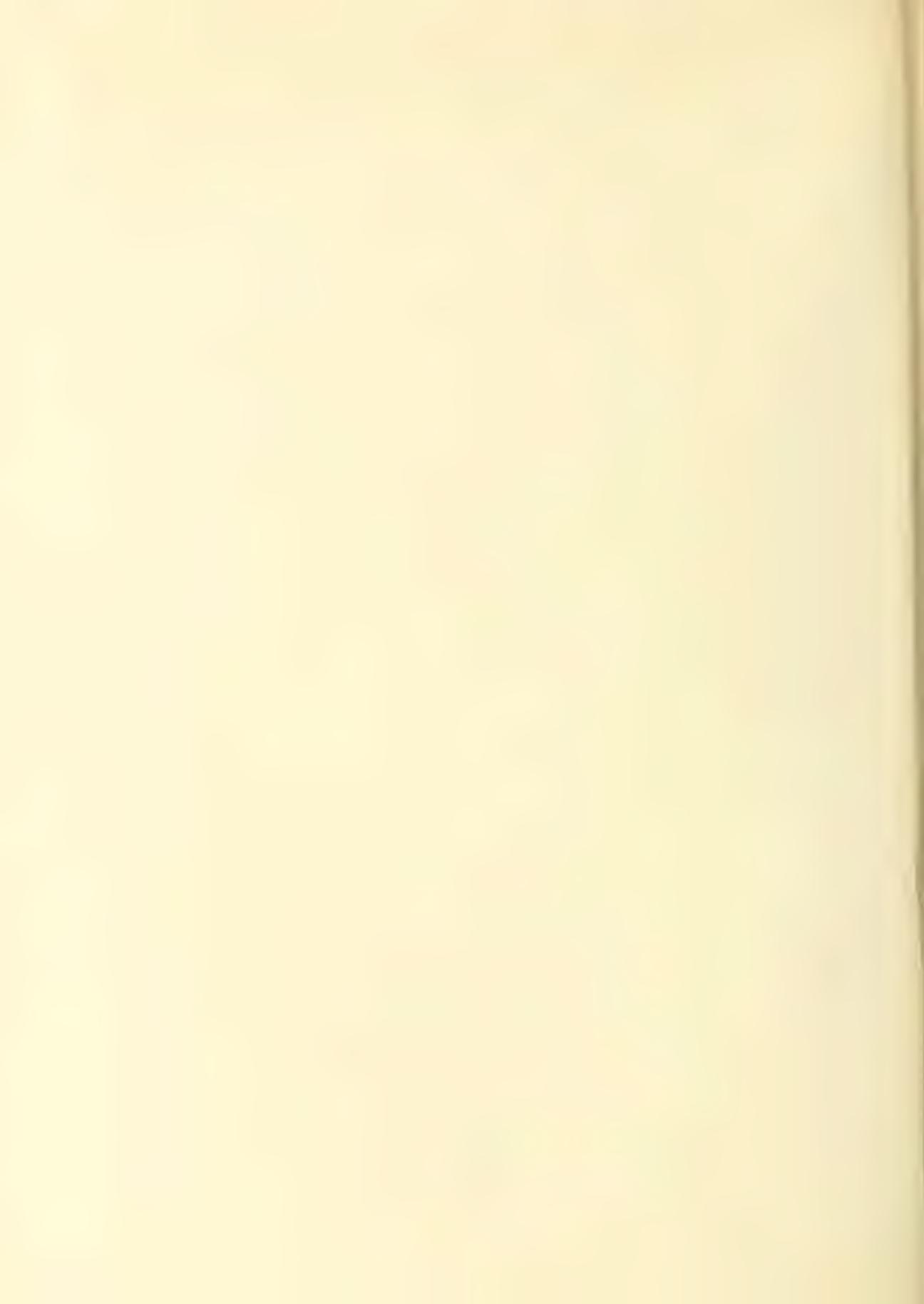
It is now time to make a survey of the work for Harrisburg. Although Abbey did not live to complete this great task, and although the paintings which he did complete were not set in position until after his death, this seems to be the best place, while the artist was in the midst of his labours, to say something of the second series of decorations for the Capitol when *in situ*, and for this description passages are quoted from an article by Mr. Royal Cortissoz in *Scribner's Magazine* for January, 1912. "There is," he says, "a story of Vasari's

PENN'S TREATY WITH THE INDIANS.

Twenty-four feet by twelve feet.







## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

which is apposite here. It relates to Ghirlandajo, Abbey's Renaissance prototype in decorative narration. The old Florentine was an eager business man, who thought that no job was too small to be accepted in his *bottega*. But as he got more and more authoritatively into his stride the artist in him snuffed the finer airs of battle and he flung sordid motives and obligations upon the shoulders of his brother David. "Leave me to work and do thou provide," he said, "for now that I have begun to get into the spirit and comprehend the method of this art I grudge that they do not commission me to paint the whole circuit of all the walls of Florence with stories.' Vasari tells in this illustration of the 'resolved and invincible character' of Ghirlandajo's mind, and as showing the pleasure he took in his work. That was like Abbey. He was in love with his work and his themes, and Harrisburg was his Florence. It is said that when there was some temporary uncertainty as to the funds available for part of his decorative scheme he hastened to assure the authorities that it would nevertheless be carried out by him, even if he had to finish some of the panels without any remuneration whatever. . . ."

After a reference to the eight earlier paintings in the dome Mr. Cortissoz says: "Through these designs the grand elements which have formed the destiny of the Commonwealth are broadly embodied. In one of the four new paintings with which we have now to deal, human history gives way before the majestic appeal of nature pure and simple; but in the other three Abbey comes to close grip with the very men who made his State, hailing them by name, painting their portraits, and, in a word, making the drift of his whole decorative purpose more and more intimate and poignant.

"In the rotunda it was his rôle to touch the imagination of everyone entering the building with a sense of what Pennsylvania has owed to divine inspiration and to the bounty of the earth. These large motives belonged on the threshold, and in the Capitol's grandest, most aerial chamber. The very concrete, personal issues dealt with in the later decorations are explained by their positions. He had now to embellish the walls of the House of Representatives, and there he decided to confront the legislators with paintings recalling

## HARRISBURG DECORATIONS

those who had before them laboured for the State. Above the rostrum of the Speaker he chose to place "The Apotheosis of Pennsylvania," which is really a painting in praise of famous men, a record of high endeavour. For the unification of his noble company of explorers, sea-captains, soldiers, religious leaders, and other constructive pioneers, he had to devise some linear web that would not only hold them together but bind them in the harmony of a room whose scale and character had already been fixed. It was a difficult problem to introduce so many figures, and yet not make them into a crowd, to break the mass into small groups which should detach themselves without landing in isolation, to make the "setting" compose all the trouble and at the same time not unduly assert itself. He hit, I think, upon a phenomenally good solution, one which is the more surprising, too, when you stop to consider that Abbey was never a disciple of such old masters, say, as Veronese, who have so much to teach us on questions of academic balance in mural decoration.

"Across the middle of his canvas and well back of his figures he drew, in a shallow and very beautiful curve, the lines of a classical entablature. Above them he unrolled a spacious sky, thus gaining at once the necessary depth and largeness of atmosphere. We feel rather than see the colonnade enclosing the actors in his scene; it unites them, but it does not distract attention from them. So it is with the 'Genius of State,' enthroned beneath a cupola against the sky, at the apex of the composition. This presence manifests itself, and is, in fact, indispensable, but it is so placed and so kept down in the colour scheme that it leaves Abbey's men to stand forth with no diminution of individuality. Neither are they dimmed nor are their messages muffled by the return to architectural motives in the foreground, by the fluted pillars which mark, as it were, an entrance to the colonnade. Like the latter, these pillars, surmounted by eagles, enormously contribute to the orderliness of the assemblage while they leave it free.

"It is a goodly body that looks down upon us from this canvas. The first steps below the throne where sits the Genius of State,

THE APOTHEOSIS OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Thirty-five feet square.

"REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD. CONSIDER THE YEARS OF MANY GENERATIONS: ASK  
THY FATHER AND HE WILL SHOW THEE, THY ELDERS, AND THEY WILL TELL THEE."

DEUTERONOMY.







SOLDIERS OF '61 MARCHING TO DEFEND THE STATE, OFFICERED BY GENERALS MEADE AND HANCOCK AND CHEERED ON BY GOVERNOR CURTIN AND THADDEUS STEVENS.

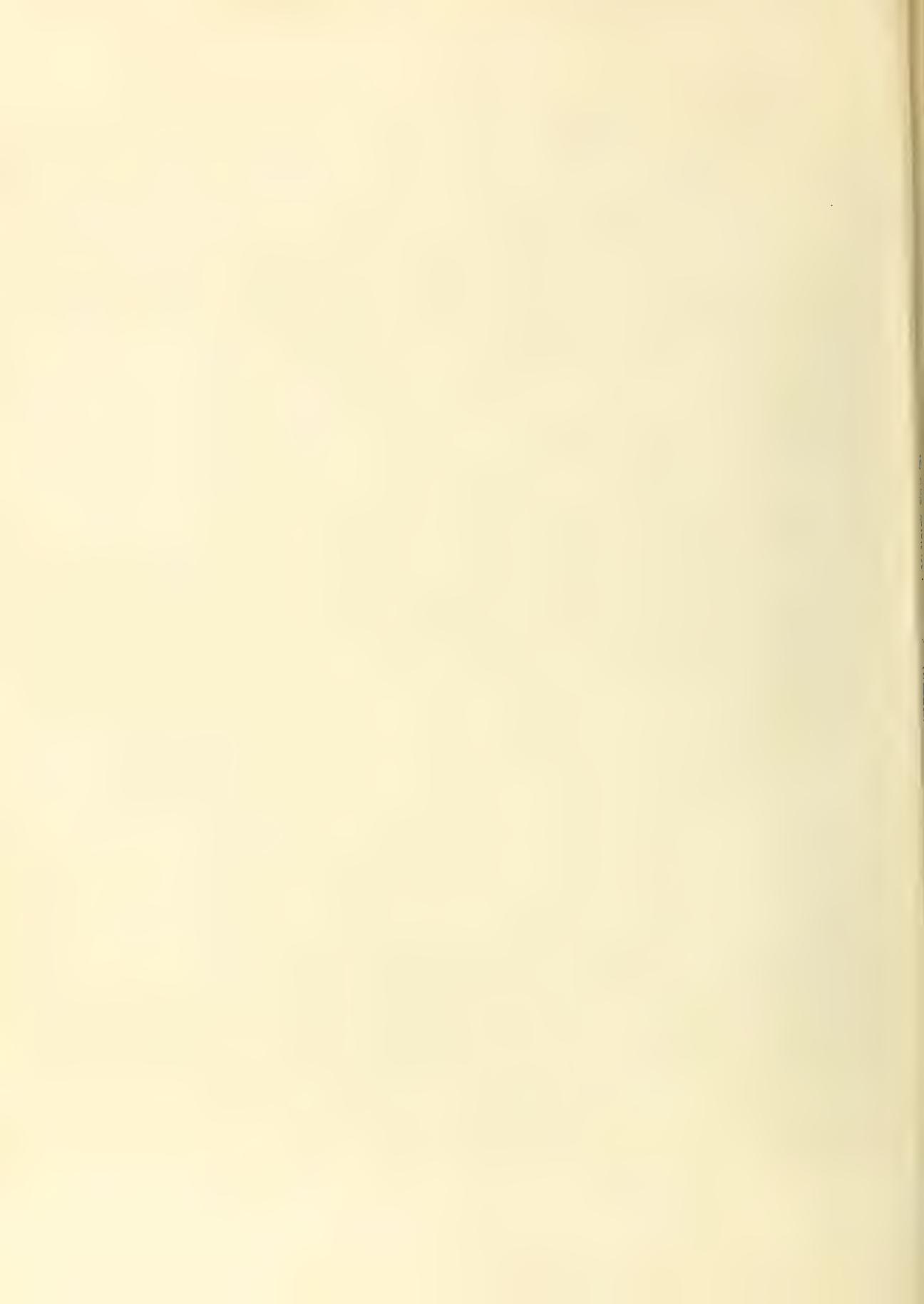
A DETAIL TAKEN FROM "THE APOTHEOSIS OF PENNSYLVANIA."

SIX STUDIES FOR THE APOTHEOSIS.

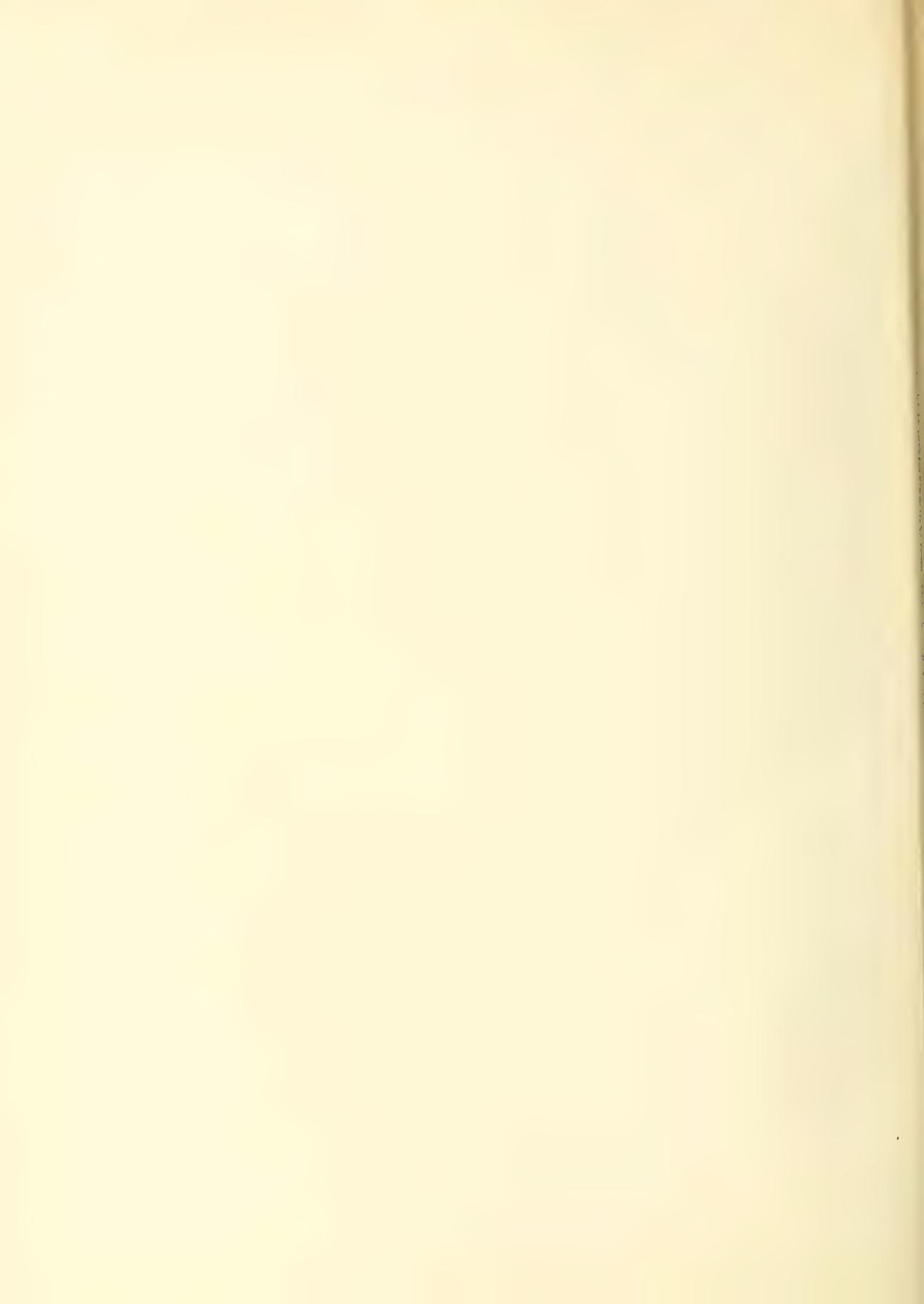
1. THE STATE, A CHARCOAL STUDY.
2. THE FOUNDER OF ONE OF THE RELIGIOUS SECTS, AN OIL STUDY.
3. THE FIRST BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA, BISHOP WHITE, A CHARCOAL STUDY.
4. GEORGE MIFFLIN DALLAS, A CHARCOAL STUDY.
5. GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE, AN OIL STUDY.
6. THADDEUS STEVENS, AN OIL STUDY.







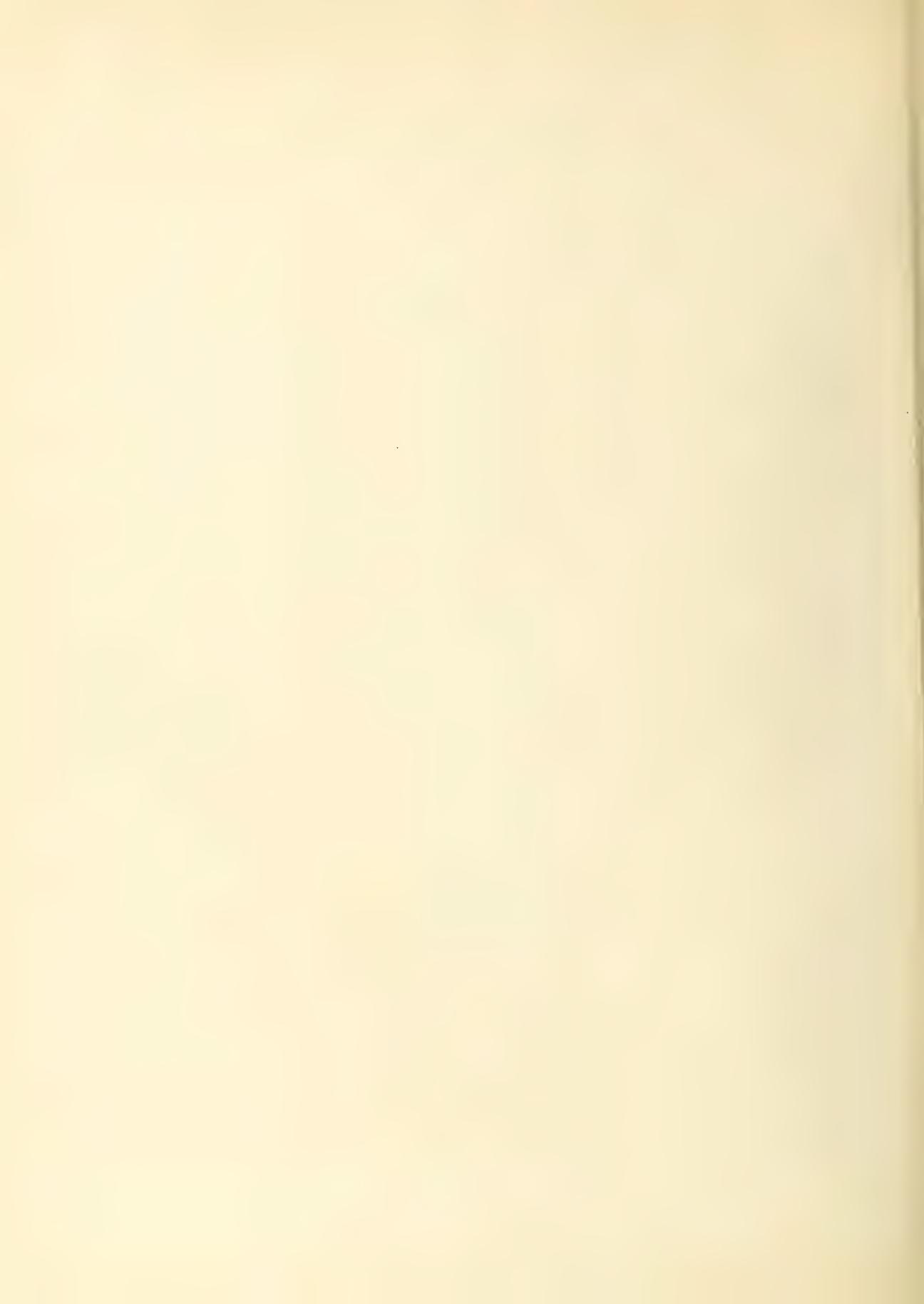




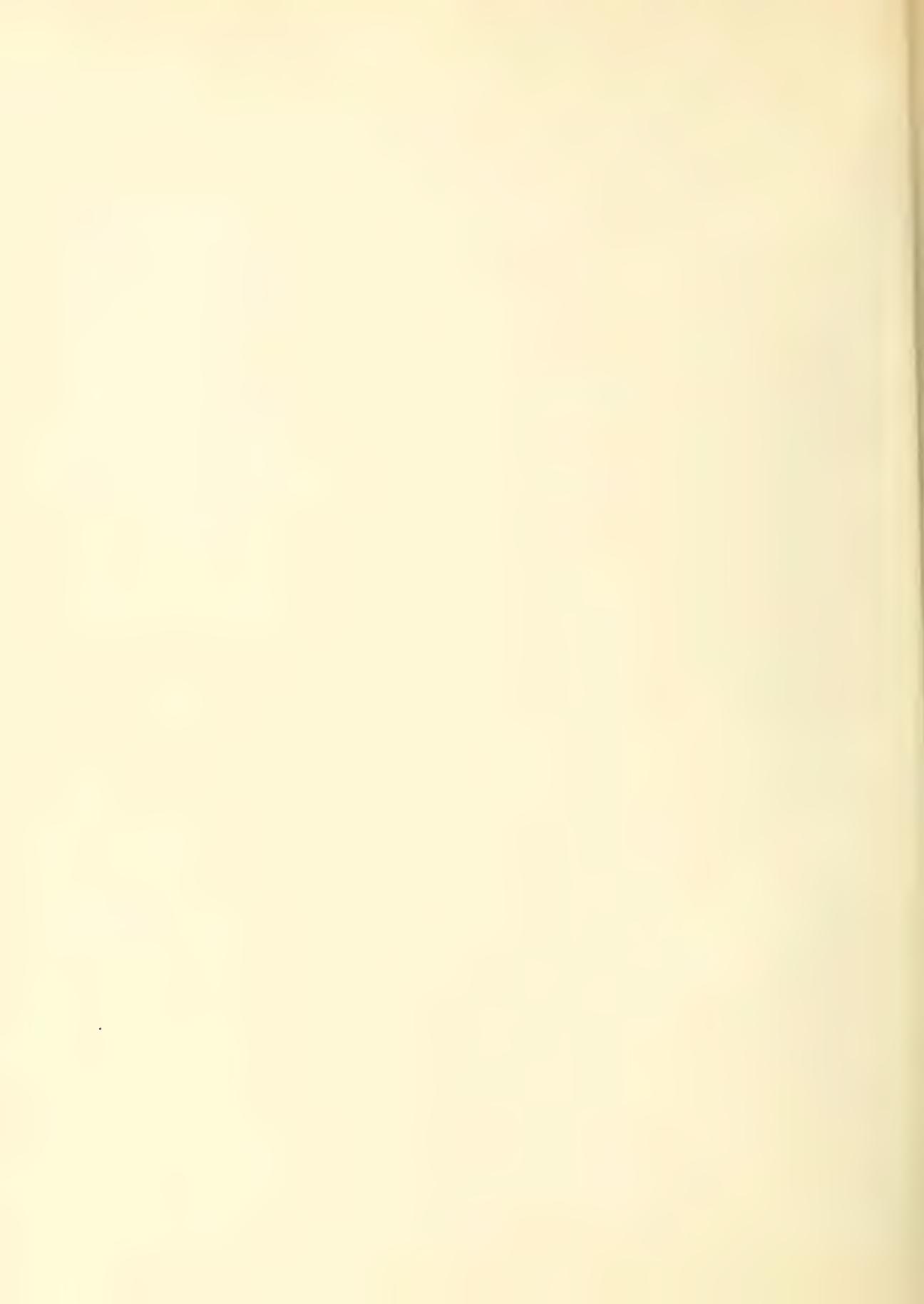




















## PENNSYLVANIA WORTHIES

steps on which laurel wreaths are shrewdly disposed, are occupied by the worthies who take us back to the earliest pages in Pennsylvanian history. There is the gallant figure, in cloak and ruff, of Sir Walter Raleigh, one of the first to obtain colonial grants, a man who foresaw the tremendous future of the New World. Near him are navigators like Hendrik Hudson, who discovered the Delaware, and old Peter Minuit, who on a memorable occasion sailed into the Chesapeake. To the right, Abbey remembers not alone the hardy path-breaker, trusting to his rifle, but the valiant pioneers who put their faith in a higher aid, Pastorius Kelpius, and the other leaders of those various religious sects which have contributed some of the most mystical chapters to the history of the Church in America. Just below these standing pioneers, marble seats are occupied by later servants of the State. John Dickinson is there, who had his doubts about the 'Declaration,' but approved himself a sound patriot when the time came. Judge Thomas MacKean sits in grave contemplation, with Provost Smith, of the University of Pennsylvania, and White, the first American bishop, for his neighbours. Place is found for old Pastor Muhlenberg, who knew so well how to strive for the right not only in but out of the pulpit; and we see also Dallas, the statesman, whoserved as Senator, as Vice-President, and as Minister to Great Britain, and John Fitch, with the model of his engine. Grouped here, at the right, are other scientific types: Oliver Evans, with hisroad engine, David Rittenhouse, the astronomer and philosopher, Caspar Wistar, the noted surgeon, and those renowned botanists, the Bartrams, father and son. Tom Paine, waking such diversified memories of oratory and of hard work at Valley Forge, stands meditatively with his hand raised to his mouth. On this side of the composition Stephen Girard, the founder of the college for orphan boys, takes one of these under his protection. Conspicuous among the balancing figures on the other side is mad Anthony Wayne, drawing his sword. Below him, carrying on the military thread, are soldiers of the Civil War, officered by Hancock and Meade, and cheered on by Governor Curtin and Thaddeus Stevens. On the same level opposite to these saviours of the Union,

## PENNSYLVANIA WORTHIES

we have an episode calling the mind back to the arts of peace, the workers in the mines and in Pennsylvania's outstanding industries of steel and oil, quietly playing their parts.

"I have said that all these people are held together through the artist's faculty for composition. The homogeneity of the piece is assured still further through a subtly dramatic touch, which signifies not only good academic design, but imaginative power. I refer to the grouping in the foreground, right in the middle of the painting, of the three supreme Pennsylvanians, William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, and Robert Morris. With true culminating effect and with perfect naturalness, they stand upon the rock upon which are engraved the words from Deuteronomy, 'Remember the Days of Old, Consider the Years of Many Generations: Ask Thy Father and He Will Show Thee, Thy Elders, and They Will Tell Thee.' Surely the lawmakers who gaze upon this fabric of the painter's art must recognise in it a living inspiration. Far beneath that shining throne they may see at work the humblest men in the State, and through the airy colonnade they can catch glimpses of the ship upon its stocks, the machines of the steel foundry, and the towering derricks of the oil field. But even more urgent is the appeal of those men of genius and devotion whose hearts were set on the highest ideals of civilisation, who wrought for spiritual as well as worldly things. It is this that stamps Abbey's decoration as a noble work of art, the fulness and the sincerity with which he placed all his faculties as a designer and painter at the service of an idea. If there is any moral force in art, then 'The Apotheosis of Pennsylvania' should help weightily in the making of a better State. . . ."

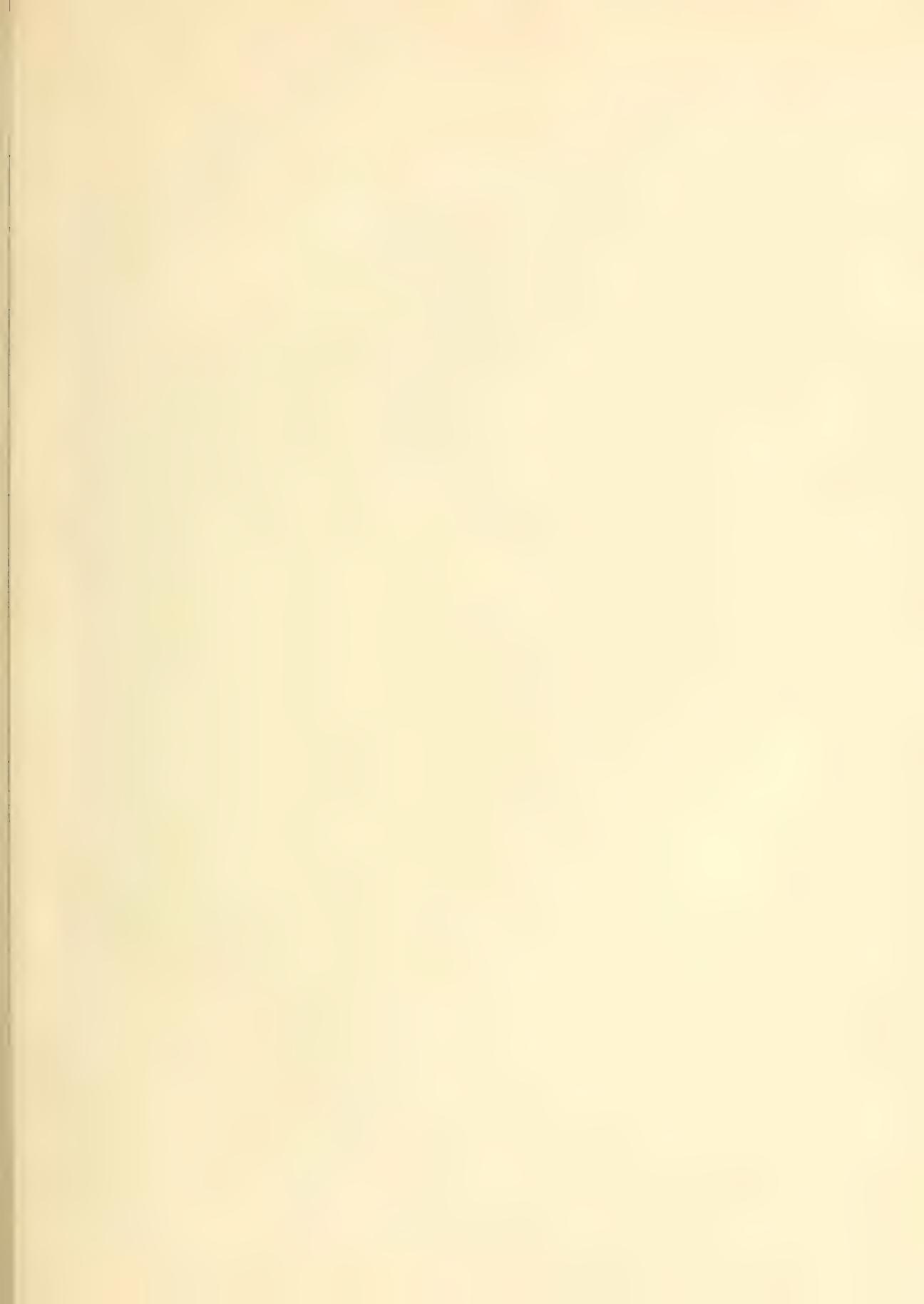
Passing over the three historical paintings—"The Reading of the Declaration of Independence" and "Penn's Treaty with the Indians," which flank the great "Apotheosis," and the "Valley Forge," which was placed in the Senate Chamber, Mr. Cortissoz reaches the allegorical design for the ceiling: "In this he gave free play to the mediævalism which was part of his artistic character. Charting the heavens after the fashion of some old cosmographer, setting sun, moon, and a multitude of stars in a sea of colour running from

THE HOURS.

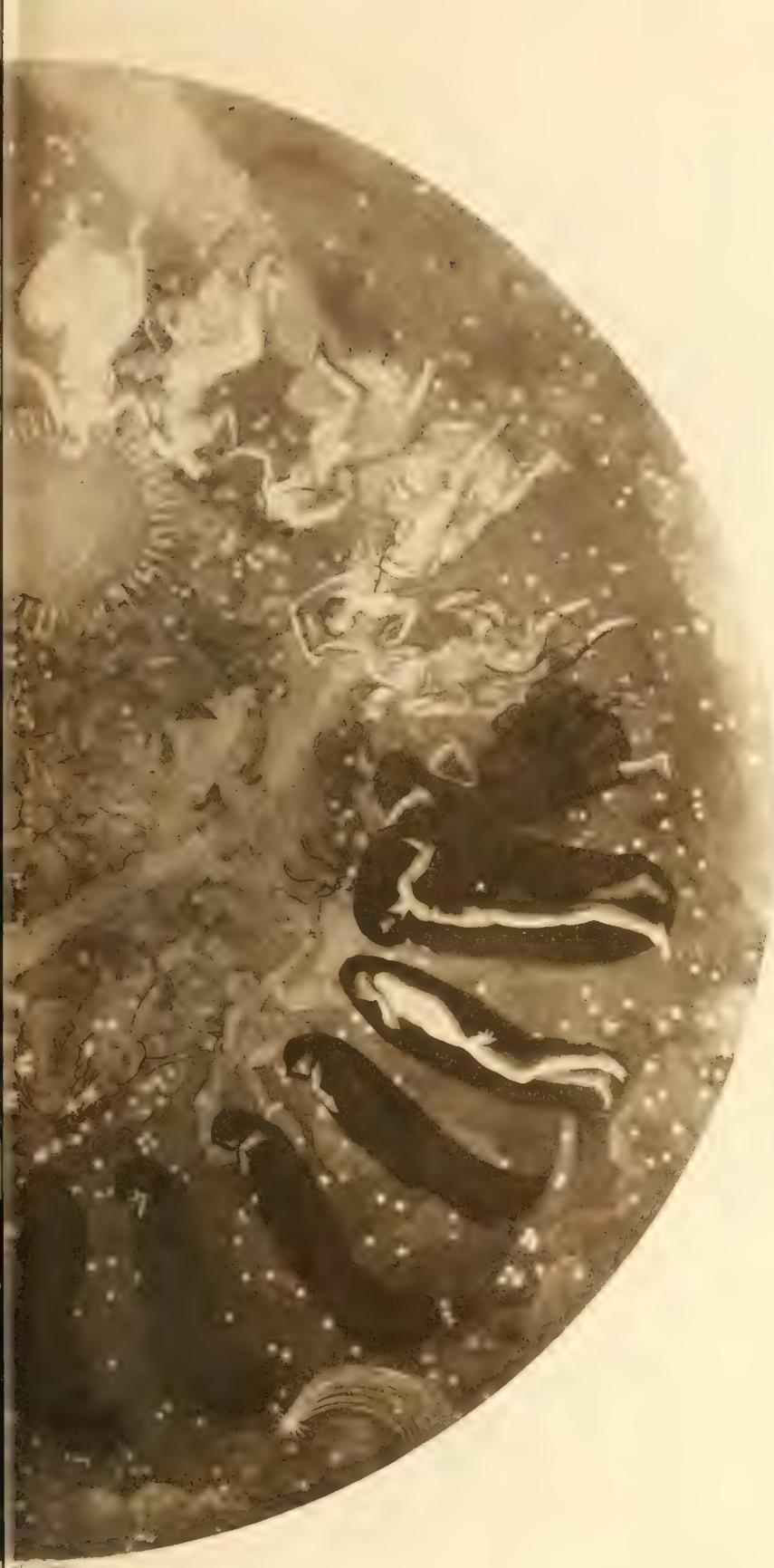
A ceiling twenty-four feet in diameter.

TWO CHARCOAL STUDIES.



















## “THE HOURS”

pale tints into darkest blue, causing the Milky Way to stream luminously across his canvas, and even thinking to bring in a vagrant comet, he unwound the procession of the hours, figuring them as maidens who open the day in light and gladness and close it in solemn draperies carried on still shoulders. Half the ceiling is all jocund beauty, the other half is all beautiful gravity. But it is, perhaps, unfair to speak of the “halves” of this painting. The truth is that light and dark are subtly fused. Variegated as it is in light and in colour, the ceiling is nevertheless all of a piece, a poetic idea harmoniously and clearly expressed. In this, as in the rest of his paintings, Abbey is sure of himself, sure of what he wants to do; he is both imaginative and workmanlike.” (Before beginning, for the ceiling, the final canvas, 24 feet in diameter, Abbey had painted a finished study of the “Hours,” 12 feet in diameter, which is now in the possession of Mrs. Abbey.)

One unavoidable omission from Mr. Cortissoz’s article is any reference to the colour schemes and the designs for all the architectural ornament in the House of Representatives and the Senate, which also were the artist’s. Nor, naturally enough, for Mr. Cortissoz was not in the artist’s confidence, is there any reference to Abbey’s intention to paint a series of decorative designs for the Supreme Court—symbolising the progress of the Law, beginning with the earliest known code, that of Khammurabi, about 1200 B.C., including Moses descending Sinai with the tables of stone, and continuing to modern times. Indeed had Abbey lived to do all the work upon this building which he had planned to do, and hoped to do, no matter what it cost him in strength and time, it would be one of the most remarkable monuments to the energy and genius of one man that exists. As it is, it is remarkable enough. It proves that the race of giants was not extinct.

One word more on the Harrisburg decorations. When, after Abbey’s death, the “Apotheosis of Pennsylvania” had been set in place in the House of Representatives, on the wall over the rostrum, with “Penn’s Treaty” on the same wall, to the left of it, the space on its right, intended for the “Reading of the Declaration of Indepen-

## THE RITTENHOUSE OBSERVATORY

dence," was empty. The oil design for this had been ready for several years, but the Rittenhouse Observatory, evidently a temporary construction, built of wood for the observation of the transit of Venus, had wholly disappeared, and Abbey, in his desire for accuracy, hoping to discover its exact locality, had delayed the completion of this painting, but in spite of researches made in libraries and in every possible quarter in Philadelphia and elsewhere, no trace of its position was found until a few weeks before his death, when, quite near the spot indicated in his design, but at a different angle to the State House, its foundations were discovered. During those last days he made a small new design and squared it off, intending to carry out this alteration, but after his death, when, at the request of the then Governor of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Abbey—lest a strange hand should in any degree destroy the harmony of that wall—accepted the great responsibility of having this painting executed in Abbey's studio at Chelsea Lodge, the position of the Observatory as shown in Abbey's original design was, by the advice of Mr. Sargent, adhered to. For the reconstruction of the Rittenhouse Observatory, at the suggestion of the late Sir David Gill, the octagonal observatory built by Wren in 1675, at Greenwich, and still in existence, was chosen as the model. Some changes were made in the balcony, and, in the painting, the building is represented as of wood instead of stone or brick. This observatory at Greenwich has no dome, domes in observatories not having come into use at that period. It was built with high windows opening from ceiling to floor, that the instrument might be passed through them, as seen in this painting, and moved from window to window as required.

Mrs. Abbey selected from Abbey's great collection of original costumes (which she presented later, under certain conditions, to the London Museum) all the garments and other accessories of the period which were to be used for this painting, and Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., confirmed her selection. Mr. Ernest Board, Abbey's former assistant, executed the unfinished work, under the direction of Mr. Sargent, who, as a labour of love, superintended the painting, going over it with his brush wherever he saw fit to do so, and Abbey's

THE READING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Twenty-four feet by twelve feet.







## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

friend, Lord Northbourne, posed for the head of the foreground figure in the group of "Signers" who had come out from the State House to hear Nixon read the "Declaration" from the balcony of the Rittenhouse Observatory.



## CHAPTER XLII

### LAST DAYS

1911 Aged 58-59

The Bookplate—Tadema and the Birthdays—Progress at Woodcote Manor—The British School in Rome and the “E. A. Abbey Hostel”—The White City Exhibition—The Beginning of the End—Abbey’s Last Letter—Death—Tributes of Friends

In the first days of this January Abbey finally made the drawing for his bookplate. Although now to be much less elaborate than originally planned, it was the same design that, every year for the last twenty years, he had been intending to carry out, introducing Mrs. Abbey’s hand with a finger pointing to the number of an open volume held in place on a roughly constructed book stand, which had been made by an ingenious model, and which Abbey had had in constant use all these years. On January 9th he asked Mr. Emery Walker to make a photogravure plate from it, and on the 20th Mr. Walker, who has superintended the making and printing of this book, sent him the first proof. Abbey finished also at this time a pen-and-ink drawing, begun in 1893, to illustrate the song “I have a House and Lands in Kent.” Meanwhile his house and lands in Hampshire were engaging a great deal of attention, and he was busy with the architecture of the period; working out his own ideas as a line for the architect, his cricketing friend, Mr. (now Sir) Reginald Blomfield, R.A. Once a week all through the winter and early spring the Abbeys motored to Bramdean, about seventy-five miles by road—starting sometimes early enough to see the sun rise on the way, occasionally stopping for the night at Winchester or Bramdean, usually, with three hours at Woodcote, returning the same day, arriving at Morgan Hall after dark.

On January 8th a letter to Walter James commiserates with him on an attack of measles. “I’m sorry you couldn’t have come down here, as the excitement and thrill of gazing upon my magnificent efforts would probably have scared the measles microbe away. Microbes, I am told, do not thrive where acute cerebral excitement is

E. A. ABBEY'S PORTRAIT OF HIS WIFE

Size of painting : Eight feet by four feet six inches

1909-11.

UNFINISHED.







## ALMA TADEMA

present, so bear this in mind another time. . . . There is nothing cheerful to tell you. A man left his cart for a moment outside our gate what time he entered the pub over the way; emerged therefrom having kept Christmas for a few minutes inside; tried to climb up on the cart; cart started; man fell under the wheel; cart loaded with turmuts ran over his arm and leg, broke both. This is the only exciting thing that has occurred here. (Mrs. Giles, she see it). . . ."

Tadema, always so punctilious to send birthday greetings to his friends and liking to receive them himself, acknowledges Abbey's congratulations on January 11th. "Never," says he, "have I had such a birthday in my life, and that happens that is to say [Tadema had never completely mastered his adopted tongue] the birthday has come to pass now seventy-five times. . . . Three-quarters of a century have passed since I howled for the first time, and I still continue to hope to continue a little while longer." It was destined that Tadema should outlive his younger friend, but only by a year.

"The Apotheosis," "The Hours," "The Grove of Academe," "The Reading of the Declaration of Independence," were now Abbey's daily tasks and kept him busy. A letter to Dr. White on March 20th mentions Harrisburg progress. "I've been pounding away on that big 35 footer all winter without cessation, and it is nearly done (unberufen!). I am hoping to get the loan of one of the large halls in the White City, for a pecuniary consideration, of course. They have some very high ones that they may not use for their exhibition this year. I am greatly hoping that you may be able to get for me those sketches from Huston—I can't imagine what he wants with them, and they are, although slight, invaluable to me, as the first notes one makes always are: the ones I sent him in 1905 as tentative sketches, and which he afterwards returned to me, and then cables asking me to send them back to him. Also the sketches I sent with the colour schemes: there were a number of these among them—one for the 'Battle of Gettysburg'—another a processional frieze with a gilded background, etc., etc. It would be the greatest help to me if you could get them.

## PROGRESS AT WOODCOTE

"Our goings on at Woodcote progress with that deliberation that characterises the B. workman, especially him of the S. of England. . . . You will arrange to visit us there as soon as we are settled. You will, I devoutly hope, find the arrangements for washing yourself ample and satisfactory. If they are not you may at least assure yourself that they have been extremely expensive. . . . Now that you are an idle man. . . . I am wondering if you will also take to advanced dairy farming. We went to see a friend, not far from Woodcote, the other day, who had a wonder of a dairy. Cows made to walk across a drained asphalt pavement before they entered the sacred milking room, where running streams were laid on in all directions. There were sterilising chambers and most ingenious traps for microbes of all kinds—triglyphs and monoliths and things. You never saw such a place. The cows in the meadow were all lying down. I dare say they get pretty tired. We are coming to the conclusion that our President [Mr. Taft] is a pretty civilised sort of a man, and if he pulls off this business of arbitration, as I suppose he will, if the Irish and Germans will let him, he will have made a big name for himself. . . . Our car has been a godsend this last six months. I don't know what we should have done without it, as Woodcote is across country, and bad to get to from here. It is across a beautiful country. Swindon over the Lambourne Downs to Marlborough. Then through the Savernake Forest to Andover, and so on to Winchester. A beautiful and varied drive. . . . We go to town this week for a night. I've an R.A. meeting and am to interview the White City people again," and three times during that March the Abbeys motored to Chelsea Lodge to dine with various friends, returning to Fairford the following day.

On March 21st Abbey writes to the late Frederick Mead, his brother-in-law: "Will you add to the obligations I am under to you, one more, and that is, I want a drum of 1861. There is a place in Broadway somewhere near Canal Street—I think—where they sell military goods and all sorts of curiosities. It is a sort of museum as well. I can't remember the name of it. They supply S. American Revolutions with war material, etc., among other things.

## "THE YOUNGER FRY"

"I've mislaid the catalogue. The drum I want is a wooden drum—a regimental drum. As I remember them, they were larger than those used since—and painted *blue*, with the State arms on the front—perhaps—although this is not essential. Will you please buy me one, with the proper straps, and send it to me by the American Line?" This drum, which duly arrived, is to be seen in the left-hand corner of the "Apotheosis."

Letters of advice and encouragement were written through the winter to his young artists, whom Abbey kept ever in mind, among them to Mr. Board, on March 27th, referring to his House of Lords panel: "Poynter spoke to me the other night in the warmest terms of your H. of L. panel, which he thought 'a most beautiful piece of work'." And, in a previous letter, writing of Mr. Board's "Madonna of the Fishermen," which he was to work upon in the Chelsea Lodge studio: "The other day it seemed to me it could be cheered up a little if you were to paint—as it were, rudely—the coat-of-arms of the town on the sail of the boat. I enclose the data. It would be interesting, I think. If you do it, it should be done *very* lightly. Just a suggestion." And again: "You will have time to do all you want. . . . You will find materials for art painting on the premises."

An idea of Abbey's attitude towards these younger men may be gained from the following letter of April 2nd, 1911, to Mr. Harrison Morris, but neither finished nor sent. In it he refers to his supervision of the House of Lords panels—which was a labour of love: "About the most interesting thing there is when one is 'getting on' a bit is watching the development of the younger fry. I have been seeing a group of young fellows—six—through a series of decorative panels for the House of Lords recently, to the extent, that is, of settling the horizon line, the scale of the figures, etc. Six lords contributed a panel each, and seemed to think I ought to see them through, which it was a pleasure to do, as one or two of the panels were by comparatively unknown men. Of course the merits of the panels vary, and the men will not be allowed by the Office of Works to paint the architecture, which being Gothic and of stone should, of course, be painted." What Abbey did not say was that the painters

## THE ROME EXHIBITION

of the panels were for the most part members of what might be called his School. Sir Luke Fildes, in talking to me recently about his old friend, expressed regret that Abbey's death had meant the withdrawal of so much of the inspiration and stimulus that he was beginning to exert.

What Abbey also did not say was that he had been approached as to taking part in the scheme while it was still inceptive, but it was not possible for him to do so. Over two years later, in 1910 (Lord Carlisle, who died soon after, being the intermediary), he was asked to paint the work to which he refers in this letter to Mr. Morris: "They wanted me to do a large panel of the Lying in State of King Edward VII. for St. Stephen's Hall in the H. of P., but Harrisburg blocks that. I can't do more than I can do."

"I have been reading," the letter continues, "with interest your remarks in the current *Scribner* about the Rome Exhibition. I am glad our chaps at home are going to have so brave a show, and I cannot help regretting that I received no invitation to contribute, from America. Our men will more than hold their own in any show—and do, as it is—." Abbey was not invited directly, because he was to be represented in the American section by two important works, sent direct from New York, one of them "The Trial of Queen Katharine," lent by Senator Clark. He was represented also in the British section, for the Committee in Rome did not object to his exhibiting in both sections. The letter continues: "The British Committee asked me whether they might borrow my picture of Richard III. from the owner here for the Show in Rome, as he was lending a good many pictures and would lend mine with the rest. I couldn't refuse and it is there. They said their things must be kept together. I had no idea until I read your article that American artists were having a show. I should have been glad to send something, although I pay very little attention to exhibitions, as I paint so few pictures. . . . I have never thought it made much difference, if the picture is a good picture, what the nationality of the man is who painted it. On the other hand, if an American paints a bad picture, I find that I'm sorry."

## FIFTY-NINTH BIRTHDAY

To Alma Tadema's congratulations on his birthday (April 1st) Abbey replied: "Why it is that at this time of life, instead of when I was younger and slimmer and friskier, I am fated to do work involving activity and agility not only of mind but of body, I don't know, but thus it is. I often think of you sitting comfortably down, in a beautifully neat studio, quietly doing beautiful things, and wish a little more of that kind of thing had drifted my way. I suppose I outgrew, or wore out, my audience for one kind of thing and had to get a brand new one for this other kind. Still I pound away, and have a long road ahead of me, if my health and strength hold out. I greatly wish that you could see my work, and when it goes up to town I hope you will, for I have a prospect of getting a high place to work in for a little while. You would be surprised, if you were to try to find one, how few places there are 35 feet high. That is 11 feet higher than my yellow tree of last year. I've been obliged to cut it in slices to work on here. I can get two at a time together, but not three." Abbey saw the three slices together—the whole 35 feet square—for the first time only after the canvases had been set up at the White City.

This year—although destined to be the last in Abbey's life—found him with his interest in all that his own hand was doing at its quickest. It is almost as though, subconsciously, knowing how short a time was still his, he was feverishly endeavouring to miss no moment. Nor were his own affairs his sole concern. Never was he more engaged by the activities of others. A few days later—busy as he was with so many projects—he found time to answer a long letter from Mr. Blashfield about certain aspects of mural work in America in which it was hoped that Abbey would take an interest. The date is April 6th, and Abbey promised to do what he could "at long range." And then on April 10th we find a long and important letter to Mr. Frank Dicksee, R.A., outlining a project which had been near Abbey's heart for a long while: "Once more I write to you as one who thinks about things. . . . It may have reached your ears that the trustees of the Exhibition of 1851 have had an idea of giving art scholarships, or travelling studentships of a substantial value, at any rate £200—and I hope £300—if they can be shown that there is sub-

## THE AMERICAN ACADEMY

stantial machinery for the awarding of these scholarships, and that there will be some string to them in order that they may feel that the recipients are not wasting their time and all their money. This idea was, I believe, suggested by Lord Esher, at the last R.A. dinner, to Brock, and he talked it over with Webb and me. . . . We thought it might be the nucleus of an Academy in Rome, on the lines of the French and American Academies, and we still think so. . . . The R.I.B.A. have been discussing the feasibility of this plan (not the 1851 plan but the Roman plan)—for a year or two—and last year sent [Mr. F. M.] Simpson—an excellent and energetic chap—to Rome to inquire into things, cost, etc., and he brought back a rather formidable array of figures—I think too formidable—you can't get a Villa Medici at one jump in these days, even if you could get one at all, but they are going on, and plans are well on the way to bear fruit, up to a point. The American Academy was pushed through by the extraordinary energy, ability, and enthusiasm of one man—McKim—who called a meeting at the University Club in N.Y., about twelve years ago, of Architects, Sculptors, Painters and *Engineers*—I think there were about twenty altogether, but I forget. They came from all over the U.S., and they founded the Academy. I am glad to think that I was one of them.

"The idea, the *raison d'être*, of the Academy is to bring together the three arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, with the idea of teaching sculptors and painters the requirements and rules of architects, and to encourage the development of the three arts in harmony—or co-operation, or whatever you choose to call it. The American Academy has been a splendid success so far. There are architectural scholarships from Harvard, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Columbia Universities, and painting and sculpture scholarships from other schools. They live in the 'Villa *Miraflore*,' which is the property of the Academy, at a nominal cost, deducted from the scholarship fund, and they have studios found them as well, free.

"Now it is absolutely essential that there be a 'hostel.' We have had, at the R.A., experience of chaps getting the Travelling Scholarship, and globe trotting with it—with no especial profit to themselves

## THE BRITISH SCHOOL IN ROME

or anybody else. To make a long story short, I went up the day before yesterday to a meeting of the 1851 people—Lord Esher, Sir Arthur Rucker, Ogilvy, of the Board of Education, and another man, Brock and Webb—and we gave our views; and the upshot of it was that they are prepared to give these sums, if we are able to show them how to do it.

“Webb’s society is all prepared—and Brock’s sculptors jointly will look after their end—but the painters! I, of course, was absolutely unable to say what we would do—but I said I’d find out and communicate. When Esher asked ‘Why Rome?’ the reason given is that which McKim gave—Rome is within reach of everywhere. It is the centre of the schools in Italy. It comprises everything—Classic, Renaissance, and the whole gamut. The other schools are there, and the atmosphere is there. The Vatican is a practically endless and inexhaustible mine—and so on—one has to stop there a very few weeks to see ‘Why Rome?’”

“Now the pessimistic wail of poor old —— the wail of the old man who has done with putting his shoulder to the wheel, and prefers to give up rather than to face the music, buck up and go ahead—is echoed, naturally, by other old men whose vitality is running low. I say this without the slightest disrespect to them, but they have no business to try to clog the wheels and by their continued participation in the affairs of the Academy prevent younger and consequently more alive men from doing the work that is to be done—and must be done. It is of no use to sit down and moan over things if you are unable to better them. The decent and proper thing is to hand over the job to those who are capable of carrying it on. I have often thought that the reason we get so little from our gold-medal men is, in the first place, the fact that they have nowhere to go when they go abroad, and that they have no guiding hand to steer them, no background of any kind, and, as a rule, are innocent of any knowledge of a foreign tongue or the value of foreign money. The Americans, by the way, are obliged to pass an exam in Italian.

“If we could consolidate our prize or ‘gold medal’ with these others, don’t you think it would be a good thing? The value, £200,

## A HOSTEL INDISPENSABLE

is not what it was thirty, or even ten, years ago. It should be annual and it should be awarded for two years at least. Men with their way to make don't care to stop away much longer than that. In France, of course, they are well looked after. I am sending you—*please return* it—the *Annuaire* of the 'Institut.' You will see under the head of the prizes of the Académie des Beaux Arts, how well their Alma Mater looks after them. They can get a lot of extra money in prizes if they are good enough. That is one of the things one admires in the French. They are always thinking of the *patrie* when they are not thinking of the *famille*, and no matter how small the sum they have at their disposal may be, they try to leave it for some good object. We do it, too, but we don't do it so much, nor so carefully. When I go up to town, which will be in about ten days, we will have a little meeting [a dinner at Chelsea Lodge], and see what can be done. It is a splendid chance and we should not allow it to slip . . . We can talk it over; but don't let us occupy our time moaning over the difficulties."

A letter from Abbey to the late Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A., develops the scheme again, and indicates how near to his heart it was during the last months of his life. The date is May 7th, 1911. "Throughout, we have argued for a 'hostel.' It has seemed to us that it is a primal necessity that the students should have a home to go to, instead of wasting time and energy in a strange country, with strange money and foreign customs, learning *how* to live. A studio with rooms and so forth we have thought should be provided; and the *raison d'être* of the American school is that it brings together in a community students in the three branches. Our idea there is that painting should be divorced as much as possible from picture frames as its ultimate goal and that the painter student and also the sculptor student should learn the limitations and requirements of painting and sculpture as applied to the decoration of buildings and monuments, and that they should recognise the fact that the three Arts are interdependent. This is all trite to you, but it is not, curiously enough, to a good many. However, the latter is a point that would be debated, and perhaps lead to irrelevant discussion. So it might be wiser to *touch upon it lightly, for the moment!*

## THE BRITISH SCHOOL IN ROME

"I have thought that some form of preliminary competition might be held, say, in Edinburgh, or Glasgow, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, etc., etc., as well as in London, and that the best men should be selected from these centres to send work for the competition to us—say in October or November.

"If we could provide cubicles for the competitors to do this final work in, as in Paris, so much the better, but I fear that it is too much to hope for; but it would be a very popular move to offer the use of our galleries and the services of our members (*not the Council*), the school committee, perhaps, or the figure painters. I think it is an opportunity to do a fine thing that we should not miss. There is no doubt we are a little unpopular, or, what is worse, unfashionable, and this would show that we are still alive. Perhaps, eventually, we might merge our own travelling studentship in this and so save some money, if that is a good thing to do. Personally I should think it wiser to try to wake up the Exhibition a little, rather than to groan over losses.

"I fear this is a long and boring screed.

"And *please*, if you think it would be better policy to ask some other member of the R.A. to accompany you on Thursday, I sincerely hope you will not consider me, as I have not the slightest wish to put myself forward in the matter; but if you think I would be of use, I should be most happy to go with you and appreciate the compliment. I think the American rules very good. They have worked well and were carefully thought out. McKim's ambition was to get 1,000,000 dols. for an endowment fund. He got 800,000 dols., but his death was a serious blow."

The British School in Rome, originally founded in 1901 for the promotion of Roman studies, was reconstituted in 1911 under the ægis of the Royal Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, and under the new scheme, in addition to Faculties of Archaeology, History and Letters, Faculties of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture were also instituted, in order that advanced and promising students of these arts might enjoy facilities for further study similar to those offered by the French and American Academies in Rome.

## THE BRITISH SCHOOL IN ROME

Although four members were to be appointed by the Royal Academy it will be seen in the passage quoted below from notes supplied by Mr. Evelyn Shaw, the Honorary Secretary of the Royal Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, that Abbey was appointed a member of the first Council, not by the Academy but by the Commissioners, and that even as, in the country of his birth, he was one of the original incorporators of the American Academy in Rome, so in England, he was in the forefront of the movement to establish the British School, although the Royal Charter of Incorporation was granted to the School only after his death.

"Abbey's connection with the scheme [writes Mr. Shaw] dates back to 1910, when he was approached by the Royal Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851 for advice as to the establishment of what are now the Rome Scholarships in Architecture, Sculpture, and Decorative Painting. His keen interest in the Commissioners' plans at once made itself felt, and when the British School in Rome was reconstituted he became an original member of the Faculty of Painting and was also the first representative of the Royal Commissioners of 1851 on the Council, being succeeded as a member of the latter body by Mr. Sargent."

The first step in the reconstruction of the British School was the erection, from designs by Sir Edwin Lutyens, of a new building in the Valle Giulia, on land presented for the purpose by the municipality of Rome, and situated within a short distance of the Porta del Popolo. Abbey's name and fame are kept in memory at the British School by the "E.A. Abbey Hostel," presented by Mrs. Abbey as a memorial to her husband. The Hostel provides a certain number of studios with bedrooms, to which the decorative painters have the first claim. Mrs. Abbey's letter to Lord Esher (as Chairman of the Board of Management of the Royal Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851) in 1913, offering this endowment, mentioned that the Hostel was to be a token of her husband's and her own recognition of the hospitality which Abbey had received during the thirty-three years that he had lived in England, and especially from the members of his own profession, "who not only accepted him as one of them-

## THE "E.A. ABBEY HOSTEL"

selves, but elected him to membership of their various bodies." It was Abbey's intention, this letter continued, one day to paint and to present to the English nation a decoration for a public building in London. This no longer being possible, the Hostel was offered to the British School in Rome in the hope that it might in some way so aid the activities of that institution, in which he took so vital an interest, that it might one day send forth an artist who should carry on his work and traditions. Facing the main entrance to the school, in a niche of the Hostel, is a bust by Sir Thomas Brock of the artist whom it commemorates, exhibited in the Academy of 1917.

To return to the narrative—on April 10th, the same date as the letter to Mr. Dicksee, Abbey tells Dr. White, in the last letter he was to write him: "Kiralfy has been persuaded by Lord Blyth to let me have the use of one end of the big Machinery Hall at the White City, Shepherd's Bush. It is about 40 feet high, and I can get my big thing ['The Apotheosis of Pennsylvania'] up all together there and polish it off—I trust (*unberufen!*) in no time...." and thither went the big canvases, the "Apotheosis," the "Hours" (the ceiling), and "Penn's Treaty with the Indians," and to Chelsea Lodge went the canvases for Plato's "Grove of Academe."—That is the last letter that has come to light in Abbey's own hand, although several very important ones about matters concerning the British School in Rome and Academy affairs were written in the next weeks.

By request Abbey sent to the exhibition at the White City—the "Coronation" Exhibition—his "May-Day Morning" and "Crusaders sighting Jerusalem." He went up to Chelsea Lodge later this spring than was his wont—not until April 24th—partly that he might push on the Harrisburg work and the design for the "Grove of Academe" as far as possible before setting them up in London, and partly because—as he was not to return to Morgan Hall again, except to make the move to Hampshire—he wished to select from a mass of accumulated studies a large number (the majority of them comparatively small) which had been made for the "Holy Grail" frieze, for the Harrisburg work, for the Coronation picture, for the Paris reredos and other paintings, as well as many designs for pictures not yet

## A BUSY SPRING

executed, with the purpose of completing them and having an exhibition and sale of these in London and in America. Indeed, he had never seemed more full of enterprise than when he motored up to town in the spring of 1911; had never seemed more vigorous mentally, more interested, both in his own work and in many matters outside his own work, for he not only attended all the meetings of the Royal Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, in connection with the British School in Rome, but he was full of new projects for the conduct of the Royal Academy, its schools and its exhibitions. He went every day to the White City to do the little that was needed to finish the work there, and ordered—that it might be set up in the Chelsea Lodge studio—the big canvas, 50 feet by 13 feet, for the “Grove of Academe,” intending to place upon it at once the design he had prepared. But this was not to be, and the canvas was never set up. He attended the Private View at the Academy and the Academy banquet and the “Greenwich” dinner; was present as President at the dinner of the Artists’ Cricket Club, in May, having previously had his usual Chelsea Lodge dinner for certain of its members, which was always followed by their business meeting in the studio. He had the promised “little meeting” of a number of Academicians, that they might discuss the scholarship for Rome and other problems, and on May 18th he had a very happy day at Cornbury Park, part of Wychwood Forest, in Oxfordshire, where he went for the wedding of his young friend, Rosalind, the elder daughter of Mr. and Lady Margaret Watney.

On a lovely day early in June Abbey motored down to Woodcote Manor for what proved to be his last visit there, and although he was then visibly ailing neither he nor Mrs. Abbey dreamed of the catastrophe so near at hand. A few days later Sir William Osler and Mr. Donald Armour held a consultation and decided that an investigatory operation was necessary, but when Abbey was told of this he refused to believe that it was anything serious. “It can’t be that! I have so much work to do,” he said, “and I feel so capable of doing it!” Nor would he allow a dinner party at Chelsea Lodge, fixed for June 9th to be put off. The invitations had been sent out some time

## ILLNESS

before, and Abbey, eager as ever to see his friends, was unwilling that they should be cancelled. In the meantime Mrs. Abbey had cabled to Abbey's friend and correspondent, Dr. White, one of the most eminent surgeons in America, but now retired, who was going to St. Moritz in any case in July, begging him to come to them at once, and this he did and was present, with Sir William Osler and Mr. Armour, when, on June 25th Sir Berkeley Moynihan performed the investigatory operation, and he remained for a fortnight after, until Abbey had sufficiently recovered from its effects. There was no hope. The surgeons found that nothing could be done, the liver having become affected, and the end was a matter of only weeks.

Abbey not having been made aware of his condition, thought that the extreme heat, which in 1911 began early in May and continued through the summer, was the cause of his slow convalescence; and he continued to make plans for future work, dictating among other letters an order for £50 worth of colours. (These after his death were distributed among his young artists.) His thoughts were much set on the new home, and he found interesting beguilement in choosing William Morris chintzes. Among the many flowers sent to him by friends he found delight in a blue hydrangea brought by Alfred Parsons. He enjoyed short visits from old and intimate friends and took pleasure in following the cricket news and listening to the books read aloud to him—*The Broad Highway*, *Qued*, *The Blue Lagoon*, the last not quite finished on the day before he became unconscious. His last dictated letter that has come to light was to his old associate at Harpers', Mr. J.E. Kelly, who had happened to write, not knowing that he was ill.

“Chelsea Lodge,  
“42 Tite Street, S.W.,  
“July 15th, 1911.

“MY DEAR KELLY,

“I cannot tell you how deeply I appreciate your writing me after all these years, and especially what you say about our early days together—those early days when everything seems possible, and when one's work is the most devouringly interesting thing there is in life. You were an exceedingly good boy, and I have no doubt that, with

## LAST DAYS

your principles, you are just as good a man. So many of my old friends have died during these last few years that I look forward with very great dread to a visit home. I have heard from time to time of sculpture you have done, but I do not think I have ever seen any reproduction of it. You had such good ideas in your early, warlike moods, that I hope that some of those subjects which used to be suggested by Walt Whitman have been carried out by you in some sort of scale. I remember how much Winslow Homer used to help you, and I wish that some time some of us, who knew so much more about him than ignoramuses do who have written about him, could write down something that would really do him justice, for he was a very great and single-minded man. Why don't you do it?

"I am rather weak just now and am dictating this to Mrs. Abbey while I am lying in bed. It takes a sort of upset like this to find how many good friends one has got in the world. My friends are untiring in their attentions and kindnesses. I am very grateful for any news from time to time, for nearly all my old correspondents are dead. I hope that you will come to England and will come to see me.

"Yours always sincerely and affectionately,  
"EDWIN A. ABBEY."

"DEAR MR. KELLY,

"Mr. Abbey wishes me to add a few lines to tell you that for the last years he has been hard at work for the State Capitol of Pennsylvania. His contract was direct with the State. . . . He was much touched by your letter.

"Yours sincerely,  
"M. GERTRUDE ABBEY."

The last ten days of Abbey's life were spent in the studio, where he liked best to be, and whether his bed had been carried; and here about him, in constant sight, were his "Valley Forge," waiting to be sent to Harrisburg, and his "Columbus in the New World," waiting for the new study of the sea-shore, which was to have been made that summer, his "Hamlet," his "Education of Isabella the Catholic," the design for "The Grove of Academe," and the design for "The Reading of the Declaration of Independence" for Harrisburg.

## DEATH

Although increasingly weak, he remained conscious, his mind perfectly clear, until Sunday. He then sank into coma and death followed at one o'clock on the following Tuesday, August 1st, 1911. He was fifty-nine years and four months old.

The mortal part of Edwin Austin Abbey was cremated at Golders Green on August 3rd, where the first part of the service was read, and his ashes were conveyed to Old Kingsbury and buried in the new part of the churchyard, where the Committal was read in the presence of a great number of friends, among whom were the American Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, the President of the Royal Academy, and many artists and artist-cricketers. Mr. Seymour Lucas represented the Princess Louise. Mrs. Abbey was accompanied by Alfred Parsons, Walter James and Mrs. James.

On November 9th the urn was exhumed and reinterred in the old part of the churchyard in a small marble tomb which, placed under the ground, was fixed to the headstone. The Committal, with accompanying prayers, was read by the vicar in the presence of Mrs. Abbey, Sir Thomas Brock, Walter James and Mrs. James, Mrs. William Philipps, and Elizabeth Mitchell. Mr. William Philipps, Councillor of the American Embassy, was at the last minute called to other duties and could not be present. Both the headstone and the marble tomb were the work of Sir Thomas Brock.

From a large number of letters of condolence which Mrs. Abbey received, all bearing testimony to Abbey's kindness and sincerity, and all expressing disbelief that so vital a spark could really have been extinguished, a few typical sentences are given.

Abbey's old friend Alma Tadema, who was not long to survive him, wrote: "He was a golden nature warming like sunshine everyone who came near him."

The then President of the Royal Academy, the late Sir E. J. Poynter, wrote: "I do not know what to say to tell you how grieved I am for you at the loss of that good man and great artist. It seems impossible that anyone so genial and so friendly to us all should have passed from us, and my colleagues will feel it deeply. To me my dear friend will be a great loss, for we were at one in our views about

## TRIBUTES

art and about Royal Academy matters, and I feel that we lose one of our strongest members."

Among other fellow artists' testimonies are these:

From Luke Fildes, R.A.: "He possessed qualities that endeared him to all, and in his passing away we, and those interested in art in his adopted home, will mourn a dear friend and a supreme artist."

From Briton Riviere, R.A.: "When his colleagues and many friends deplore your great loss and theirs, the first thought is that it seems so hard that this should have taken place in the midst of his prime, but when one remembers the fulness and remarkable activity of his career, our only wonder is that his strength and vitality, fresh as they were, could have lasted so long."

From J. W. North, R.A.: "It is impossible for any human being just now to lighten this blow to you, but it will be future comfort for you to know how greatly your husband was loved by his brother artists and how honoured by them in every way he lived. Personally I shall miss him greatly, for his kindness and sympathy were unfailing ever, and I owe him the deepest and most respectful gratitude."

From Arnesby Brown, R.A.: "For myself I have lost one of the truest, kindest, and dearest friends I ever had, and a gap is left which will never be filled."

And this from Percy Macquoid, R.I.: "We have all lost in Art what in our lifetime we shall never see again."

We have already seen Henry Ford's letter to Mrs. Abbey on behalf of the Artists' Cricket Club. From the letters of those who were present at most of the Fairford "Weeks" I take two extracts. This from the late Arthur Studd: "It is impossible to realise that a nature so generous, kindly, affectionate, and loyal has gone out of our lives."

And this from Dermod O'Brien, P.R.H.A.: "I think of my last sight of him, tired after a long day's work, but not too tired to rig out my boy with drum and sticks and set him marching up the studio girt with sword and pistol. And so it was always—never too weary to be alert for the happiness of others, giving open-handed bounty of youthful joy and kindness to all around him, ever ready and the first with sympathy for all in joy or sorrow—a great-hearted friend."

## TRIBUTES

And this from Mrs. Walter James: "Think of the very beautiful work of art you made of your two lives in one. *Everyone* recognises it as a thing unique and wonderful."

Lady Lockyer wrote: "Sir Norman feels that he has lost one of his oldest and best friends—a friend of thirty years' standing."

Sir J. M. Barrie wrote: "I should like to be allowed to say in what affectionate regard I hold Mr. Abbey. The times he recalls to me were all happy times, and he always stands out in them as having made them still happier. Few men, I think, have been more loved by their fellow workers."

The Council of the National Academy of Design, New York, passed a resolution to the effect that the Academy as well as the whole world of Art had met with great loss in the death of one "whose international reputation was one of the glories of America."

Among American friends who wrote were Madame de Navarro (Miss Mary Anderson): "We all lament the loss of that bright, happy spirit"; Elihu Vedder: "It is the man and friend as well as the great artist whose loss I mourn"; Edward Bok: "Men were always very fond of him, and that always says so much for a man!" and Roger Sherman Warner: "His manliness, his gentleness, and his sympathetic humour came irresistibly to me, as they did to everyone whom he touched. Tarbell has just said in the *Transcript*, 'He was the most lovable man I ever knew.' I dare say this is being said at this moment by countless people."

And finally this tribute of Henry James, who survived his friend only until 1915: "My desire you should know how tenderly and faithfully I think of you and of *him* is greater than my sense of the weakness of all words... One can but stretch out one's hand... I can only wonder at the cruelty and perversity of his extinction—to say nothing of his suffering. The tenderness of my affection for him abides with me, however, thank Heaven, and the vividness of his presence and his genius, and the gallantry of his character and the immense beauty of his achievement, and, above all, the happiness of his life—and the rich felicity, every way of his career. He had *had* it, he hadn't missed it: he had sat at the full feast and had manfully, splendidly lived."

## TRIBUTES

Before the canvases at the White City were packed for Harrisburg a day was set apart for Abbey's fellow artists and other friends to see his last work before it was taken out of England, but there was no public exhibition, and on October 19th Mrs. Abbey sailed with it to America accompanied by Mr. W. G. Simmonds, Abbey's former assistant, who, after the canvases had been set in place, was to touch up, where necessary, any blemishes caused in fixing them upon the walls.

Having acceded to the request of the President and Council of the Royal Academy that there should be a memorial exhibition of Abbey's works in the winter of 1911–1912, Mrs. Abbey collected for the purpose drawings in black-and-white and paintings in oil, water-colour and pastel, many of them sent from America, and from this collection, at her request, Mr. Sargent selected the 322 works exhibited on that occasion. This large number represented only a portion of Abbey's life work. Nothing was to be seen there from the "Holy Grail" frieze in Boston, and only three small designs for the work in Harrisburg.

On March 13th, 1917, a tablet in Abbey's honour was unveiled in the crypt of St. Paul's by the Princess Louise, after which addresses were given by the late Sir Edward Poynter, P.R.A., and by the late Dr. Page, the American Ambassador. The words on the tablet, which was designed by Alfred Parsons, are these: "To the Memory of Edwin Austin Abbey, Royal Academician, who was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the first of April, 1852, and who died in London on the first of August, 1911, beloved both in the Country of his Birth and in that of his Adoption, this tablet is erected by his Friends and his Admirers."

In 1918 a tablet, designed by the late Albert H. Hodge, was placed on the wall of Chelsea Lodge by the same friends and admirers, stating that "Edwin Austin Abbey, R.A., lived here from 1899 to 1911."

THE END.

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